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Children play hockey on a frozen pond in Calgary. ISTOCK

What 2017 will bring

HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Builders, developers optimistic residential industry in recovery

Kathy McCormick

It's been a long time coming, but glimmers of good news sprinkled throughout the media these last few weeks have given Calgarians something positive to look forward to — but the recovery will be slow, say those in the residential construction industry.

And the time to buy a new home or condo is now, as costs to build continue to escalate.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has forecast total housing starts this year to be in the range of 8,300 to 9,300 units, the same as was expected in 2016 — and most builders and developers are in agreement with that, albeit with some caveats.

"We feel the first quarter of 2017 will be the most difficult that our industry has experienced in quite some time," says Dan Hippe, sales manager with Calbridge Homes. "Given that Alberta is trending towards a nine per cent unemployment rate, this will no doubt place downward pressure on our industry."

Calgary's unemployment rate climbed to 10.3 per cent in November, the highest since 1994.

But at the same time, investment in housing construction in Alberta grew about six per cent between August and September last year — something ATB Financial's chief economist sees as a positive sign.

"Construction and housing sectors may be nearing recovery and maybe even picking up steam," Todd Hirsch said in late 2016.

And it's much better than it has been in other downturns, says Allan Klassen, senior vice-president of housing for Brookfield Residential Properties.

"It's not like the crisis of 2008 and 2009," Klassen says. "People are not backing out of closing on their homes and the MLS is manageable. There is no watering down of current values."

That mindset has fared well for builders, too, says Hirsch.

"The good news is that home builders have pulled back on supply, which has kept the residential real estate market in decent shape considering."

While it has become competitive in the market today, builders have tightened their margins so there's not much more they can do, says Trent Edwards, COO of Brookfield's Alberta operations. "Homes are becoming less affordable — and they're not going down. "

A small equipment driver works at a residential construction site where new concrete driveways are ready for sod. ISTOCK

He cites recent mortgage rate increases, energy code changes, the timing of approvals to begin building, and stricter standards, such as regulations requiring wider streets in new neighbourhoods, as reasons. They all cost the industry more to build and, in turn, "they all hurt affordability" for new homeowners, he says.

"Interest rates are not going down; prices are not going down; and costs are going up."

Other factors have influenced the marketplace as well — and these will continue into 2017. The tightening of mortgage rules introduced by the federal government in the fall of 2016 makes it harder for some people to buy.

"The change in high-ratio mortgage rules is having an impact," says Stephanie Myers, vice-president of Jayman BUILT. "While this doesn't necessarily impede a purchase, it does change the type or size of home the consumer can afford."

Adds Alice Mateyko, president of Homes by Avi's single-family division: "There are different hurdles being added regarding sustainability. Specifically, a drywall tariff that's been imposed on the industry suppliers is causing the cost of drywall to escalate and the new energy code requirements have increased housing costs. Additionally, the added complexity resulting from the mortgage approval stress test will play into sustainability."

What it has done, however, is give builders and developers a chance to refine their processes and come up with new product to fill the needs of buyers today, says Don Barrineau, president of Mattamy Homes. "Now is the time for product development — new innovative stuff that's more responsive to the market."

And the residential construction industry is an entrepreneurial lot of born optimists, who have been through the ups and downs of the energy sector before.

"Calgary is a significant market," says Barrineau. "If big money is not here, it's coming — and it will buy up all the land."

Calgary is a great city, adds Edwards. "It has amenities, a great vibe, youth, intelligence, and it has a new airport, as well as being a major distribution hub and centre for clean technology. We are extremely confident in this city."

The people of Calgary, too, are positive by nature, says Kelly Schmalz, development manager for Genstar Development Company.

"2017 has a hopeful outlook for many Calgarians. 2016 was a year of transition. Many new businesses were started in Calgary and existing businesses adapted to get stronger. This shows a resilient desire in our population to set up roots in Calgary — a strong sign for our economic growth leading into 2017."

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From schools to safety, know what to look for when moving with your family. ISTOCK

Scouting family-friendly neighbourhoods

Karen Durrie

When you're looking for a home whether you are moving — or starting — your family, there are some distinguishing features you'll want to keep an eye out for, and to ask about when you're scouting the city's many new neighbourhoods.

Local schools — or schools that are a short bus-ride away — are at the top of the list, if you intend to stay in the community through your children's school years.

You'll want kid-friendly amenities such as tot lots, sports playing fields, green spaces, parks, nature and pathways so that you can engage in active living opportunities right outside your door.

Other signs of family-friendly neighbourhoods include amenities such as daycares, libraries and recreation centres.

And you'll want the safest neighbourhood you can find — one without expansive crosswalks across wide traffic routes, with well-lit streets, and walkability factors such as sidewalks.

And as far as safety goes — ask what features are built into the houses, as well.

Brookfield Residential's new Livingston community underway in the city's north end is a master-planned community that will eventually see 30,000 residents on 1,200 acres. Homes will include some of the newest technologies, such as sprinkler systems, says Lisa Kaiser, sales coach for Brookfield.

"It's the first community in Calgary to embrace and bring about fire protection to the next level. They will be the safest homes ever built, so for safety, security and best dollar value and being close to absolutely everything important to you, it's a great community," Kaiser says.

Here's a look at some of the newest and up-and-coming family-friendly neighbourhoods to choose from.

• **Livingston** will be larger than Cranston once it's built out, and right at the planned north end of the LRT Green line (North Pointe station). It's a 15-year build out that will include the Discovery Centre — a large recreational centre that shares space with the fire department. Touting a vision of "togetherness," the area will feature extensive pathways, parks, green and natural spaces, as well as the most energy-efficient homes built, with triple-pane windows, higher-efficiency furnaces, and increased insulation as standard.

• **Symons Gate** in the Symons Valley corridor, with its rolling green hills, is a boutique community that has a variety of housing options including attached and split-levels starting from the $250Ks. It's a quiet, low-traffic area with quick access to Stoney, Beddington and Deerfoot trails. It has daycares, health services and plenty of shopping close by, as well as the Symons Valley Farmer's Market. A new park with a playground and community gathering space just opened in December. The neighbourhood was named New Community of the Year at the Canadian Home Builders' Association-Urban Development Institute Calgary Region SAM (Sales and Marketing) Awards.

• **Mahogany** in the deep southeast features the city's largest freshwater lake, studded with beaches, pathways and wetlands. It features an exclusive beach club, a planned urban village, and a large central park, as well as 29 other parks and playgrounds. Residents can swim, boat, paddle board, play beach volleyball, and skate in the winter. Stoney and Deerfoot trails are a jaunt away, while nearby is the South Health Campus hospital, south amenities and the south end of the future LRT Green Line.

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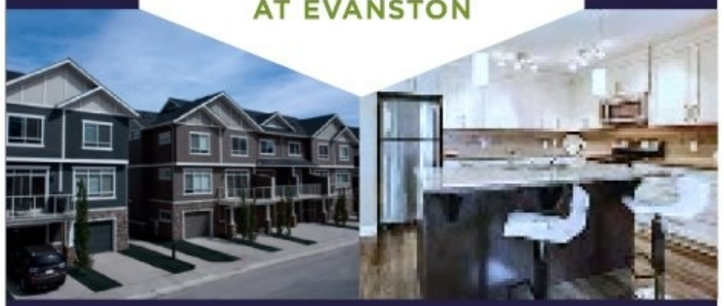

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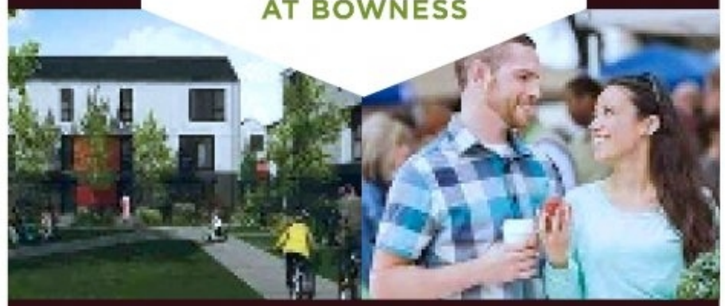

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From barracks to unique urban village

The inner city residential development of Currie is named for the Canadian Forces Base it once housed. CONTRIBUTED

CURRIE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Former military base forms the backdrop to new mixed-use neighbourhood

Karen Durrie

Nearly nine years ago, a transformation launched to convert historically significant Calgary lands into a new inner-city neighbourhood.

Currie, named for the former Currie Barracks military base it once housed, is still in the midst of development, with 200 acres in the southwest slowly becoming a unique urban village that will eventually be home to about 12,000 residents.

The first homes in Currie were built in 2009, and about 1,200 people currently live in the area's single and multi-family homes.

The neighbourhood is the last of three developments built on former Canadian Forces Base lands by the Canada Lands Company, a crown corporation that develops federal property no longer required by the government. Garrison Woods and Garrison Green were the first two completed communities.

A number of historical buildings from the military base that was built in the 1930s and decommissioned in 1998 are being retained in the master plan — many are designated provincial heritage sites. Rows of whitewashed, red-roofed barracks buildings stand as sentinels on the eastern edge of the development, housing businesses and private schools.

A wide boulevard with a walkway, gardens, benches and trees runs through the centre of the Victoria Cross townhome development, just one of the housing choices in Currie. CONTRIBUTED

Currie housing choices will include apartments, condos, townhouses, single family and luxury estate homes in a wide array of approved architectural styles.

Builders are Avi Urban, Cove Properties, Crystal Creek Homes, Empire Custom Homes, Jayman and Slokker West.

A wide boulevard with a walkway, gardens, benches and trees runs through the middle of Avi Urban's Victoria Cross townhome development, and the area pays homage to its historic roots with vintage-style signage, street names, park plaques and statuary.

While the lower-density phases one and two of the development are still underway, ground is breaking on medium and higher-density phases that will include mixed-use residential and retail. Currie will be loaded with area amenities, and destination shopping, entertainment and restaurants.

"The core of the plan is a mixed-use form of development that includes 245,000 sq. ft. of retail, and 2,500 units. About half of all future units are in the core," says Chris Elkey, senior director of real estate with Canada Lands Co.

Buyer response has been positive, with the appeal of owning new with fast access to the downtown core with close proximity to so many established and revitalized communities, such as Marda Loop.

Buyer demographics range from first-time buyers and young families to older downsizers, Elkey says.

"One of the key indicators for us with families is the day we opened a new playground, and it was just packed with kids."

Planned parks and green spaces will include a 15-acre park, and the redevelopment of Parade Square as an active hub with a regulation tournament-sized soccer pitch.

Currie recently garnered a national award from the Real Property Institute of Canada in the Comprehensive Planning — Group category.

Picture perfect setting in Calgary's northwest.

As you look out onto the rolling hills, green spaces, playgrounds and castle-ruin inspired landscapes you'll be transported to Old-World British Isles. But the moment you pass the community entrance, you have every modern convenience at your fingertips. It's the best of both worlds – without compromise.

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Home sweet home office

Maybe your new home has a den, a spare bedroom or even a great little corner space where you can carve out a home office. Whether you work from home or use the space to pay bills and surf the web, you'll want a pulled-together place that is both practical and aesthetically pleasing. An efficient work area includes functional storage, good lighting, vertical shelving to maximize space, and clever, clutter-busting touches. Here are four things to make your home office awesome

Karen Durrie

Cable tamer

Does your tangle of cables from power bars, routers and other devices resemble a massive electrical Kraken? All those office cables can combine to create an unsightly monster tumbling from your desk. The CableBin by BlueLounge contains the mess in an elegant, wood-finish canister. Smaller device cords can easily pop through the top of the lid, and devices can be placed on top to charge, while other cables can be accessed through a side outlet. Made of flame retardant plastic. Find online at bluelounge.com, also carried by Amazon.ca and Urban Outfitters. About $120.

Sounds great

Speaking of cords — eliminate them as much as possible by using bluetooth devices and accessories. If your otherwise-fabulous computer monitor has fairly crap-quality speakers, a bluetooth speaker is an ideal solution for getting great sound from an inconspicuous (and wireless!) little device. You can put it anywhere in the room, pair it with your computer or other device, and enjoy your tunes or podcasts while you work. Bluetooth speakers range in quality and price. This little Aukey portable speaker is a cool, affordable option that sounds great, has about eight hours of battery life before needing to be recharged, and costs about $24 at Amazon.ca. It's also water and shock resistant, and you can strap it to a bike.

Top shelf

Desks are the command centres of home offices, and there are millions to choose from. The versatile Rupert Freestanding unit by Amisco features an industrial loft-casual vibe, and can be configured to adjust the height of the table and shelves. It comes in distressed solid birch and a variety of stain finishes. It can even be used as a kitchen island (or maybe you want to work from your kitchen island!). Find it at Bracko Brothers Quality Furniture, $1,798.

Sitting pretty

If you sit for a living, you've probably heard the saying "sitting is the new smoking." Sedentary jobs can wreck our bodies and impact our health and longevity. One way to fight back is with active office furniture, such as standing desks and active-sitting solutions. The Core Chair was designed based on scientific research to reduce fatigue and discomfort, increase blood flow, allow constant subtle movements to strengthen core muscles, and encourage good posture to alleviate back pain by preventing slumping. Find it — and numerous other active sitting products at Fitterfirst. $995.

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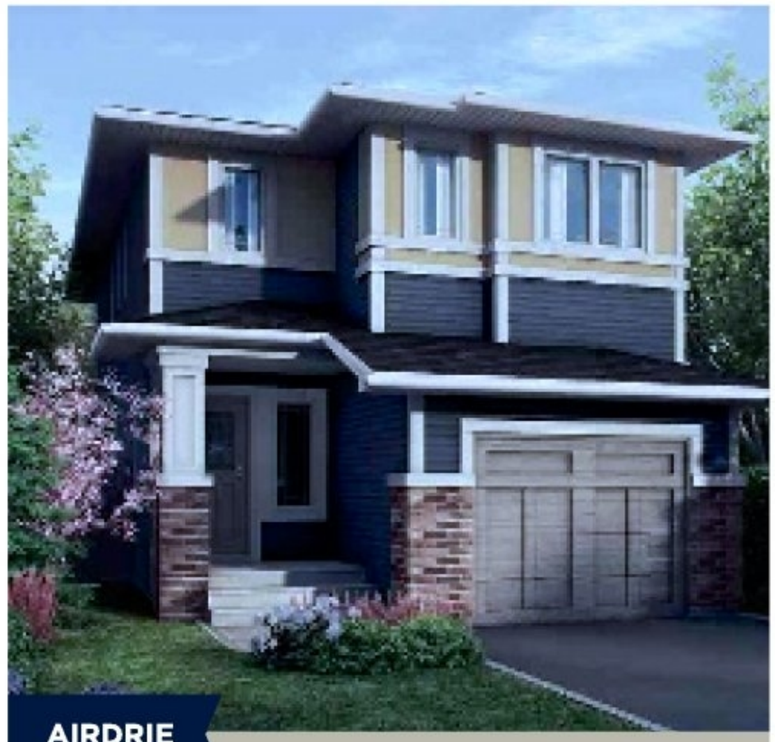

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‘A greater sense of community’

Mattamy Homes builds various types of homes in aesthetically-pleasing neighbourhood settings that have proved to be popular with Calgary homebuyers. CONTRIBUTED

MATTAMY HOMES

Innovative builder plans two more developments

Kathy McCormick

How confident is Toronto-based Mattamy Homes about Calgary? Here’s a quote from its Calgary president: “Calgary is a significant market — and if big money is not here, it is coming,” says Don Barrineau.

“And they will buy all the land.”

Quite ironic, considering the largest privately-held builder/developer in North America is, in fact, Mattamy Homes — and it moved into the Calgary area, building its first home in Airdrie’s Windsong in 2009.

“We bought land in Calgary, but it was slower coming to market.”

Now, it is bent on changing that. The company opened Cityscape in the northeast quadrant of Calgary along Metis Trail in the spring of 2013 and it hasn’t looked back.

The company’s year-end was the end of May 2016 — and it was a record year for Calgary, says Barrineau. “We had more than 600 closings from just two master-planned communities.”

Mattamy has a unique way of building homes and communities that has captured the homebuyers, he says. Mattamy is both the neighbourhood developer and the home builder, constructing all the various types of homes in the community, so “we’re efficient and innovators. We can take into account the entire community design, from parks and architecture, to making it a more liveable, aesthetically pleasing community.”

While several companies in Calgary do the same, most have other builders in place.

Barrineau admits that this year may not be quite so rosy for the Calgary division, with the ongoing economic slump. “Certainly the market is stubborn and consumers are slower to move than in the past. We do anticipate our volume will be off 25 to 30 per cent, not unlike the rest of the industry.”

But the company is not concerned. “We take a long view on the markets in which we operate, and we are particularly high on Calgary.”

Mattamy Homes strives to create more liveable, well-planned communities. CONTRIBUTED

YORKVILLE

Yorkville will be located in the southwest quadrant, south of the existing Silverado at 210 Avenue.

It will be bounded on the west by an extension of Spruce Meadows Way and on the east by Sheriff King Street.

Some highlights:

- It will total 194 hectares with the first phase of 129 hectares developed with partner Ronmor Development Inc.
- It will be similar in size to Cityscape, Mattamy's first Calgary neighbourhood in the northeast quadrant.
- The first phase, not anticipated to open for another year and a half, will consist of 300 lots of both single-family and multi-family units.

That said, it is going full-steam ahead on two new master-planned communities for the future, Carrington in the northwest quadrant of the city, and Yorkville in the deep southwest.

"These are both large-scale, new urbanist communities with walkability, environmental sensitivity, parks, trails, and a variety of product types intermingled throughout the neighbourhoods," explains Barrineau

"We work hard on our architecture, so the streets can integrate all types of housing and give a greater sense of community."

As well as Cityscape, Mattamy's first Calgary neighbourhood, the developer continues to build in Airdrie's Southwinds. "With four major land positions all actively in build mode, we have 12,000 lots," says Barrineau.

"We plan to be here awhile. Our ultimate goal is that we'd like to be a significant presence in Calgary, if not No. 1."

"We work hard on our architecture, so the streets can integrate all types of housing and give a greater sense of community.

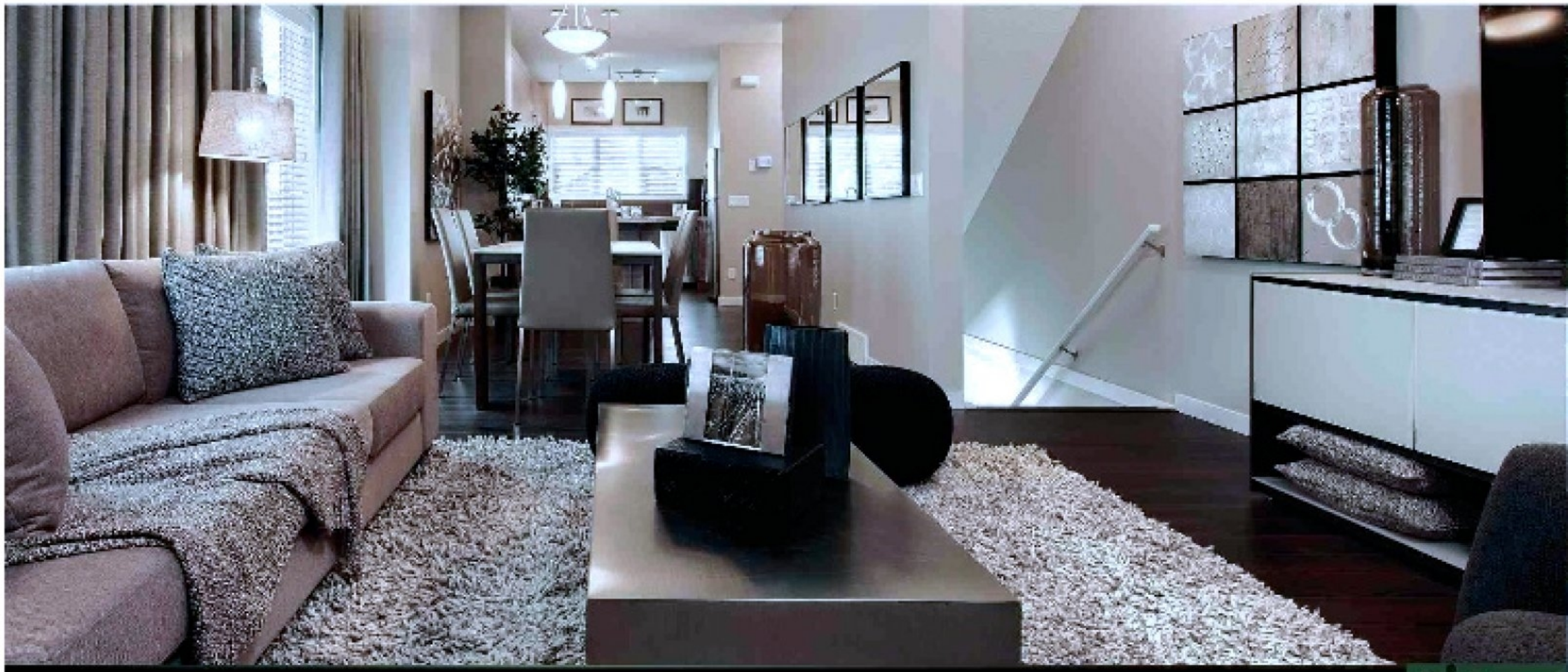
Don Barrineau, Mattamy Homes' Calgary president

CARRINGTON

Carrington will be located in the northwest quadrant, east of 14 St. and north of Stoney Trail.

Some highlights:

- Mattamy, one of the developers in this new neighbourhood, has land to build 4,300 housing units upon completion.
- It features a four hectare environmental reserve, park space and a natural storm water reserve.
- The Rotary/Mattamy Greenway will run through it — the massive Parks Foundation Calgary pathway that will connect 55 neighbourhoods in a 138-kilometre loop around the city, making it the largest urban system in the world.



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Decidedly Jazz has four dancers playing Juliet, each inhabiting the role at a different point in the play. AARON CHATHA/METRO

Police admit investigation was years late

CRIME

Union head, other officer charged with 2008 assault

Elizabeth Cameron
For Metro | Calgary

The Calgary Police Service admitted Tuesday it should have conducted a formal investigation into the actions of Sgt. Les Kaminski and another officer in 2011.

Kaminski, recently elected as Calgary Police Association president, and Const. Brant Derrick were arrested on Tuesday after the Alberta Serious Incident Response Team (ASIRT) found reasonable grounds to believe offences were committed during the arrest of Jason Arkinstall in 2008.

Kaminski has been charged with assault with a weapon and perjury. He was released on bail and will make a court appearance on Feb. 7. Derrick was charged with assault causing bodily harm and released with conditions.

Arkinstall was acquitted of uttering threats against Derrick in January 2011. At the time, CPS determined a formal investigation was not required, instead opting to conduct an internal review.

"In light of the Crown's findings, and in hindsight, the Service should have conducted a formal investigation at the time," said Supt. Steve Barlow.

The complaint that led to ASIRT's investigation came from Arkinstall's legal counsel in December 2013, and the director of law enforcement was notified on Jan. 21, 2014.

Susan Hughson, ASIRT executive director, called the delay "unfortunate" and said Kaminski was aware he was under investigation "for some time" — including during his campaign for president.

Sister of accused killer Douglas Garland testifies about aiding police, metroNEWS

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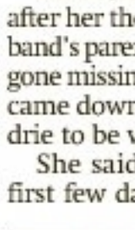
Sister of accused testifies

TRIPLE-MURDER TRIAL

Patti Garland identified vehicle to police



Lucie Edwardson
Metro | Calgary

The sister of Douglas Garland, accused of killing a Calgary couple and their five-year-old grandson back in June 2014, told the court Tuesday how she helped lead police to her brother.

Patti Garland was third to take the stand on the second day of her brother's triple-murder trial, after her parents Archie and Doreen Garland.

Douglas Garland, 56, is accused of three counts of first-degree murder in the June 2014 disappearances of Alvin and Kathy Liknes and their five-year-old grandson, Nathan O'Brien.

Their bodies were never recovered, but the courtroom heard on day one of the trial that DNA of all three had been discovered at the Garland family farm — including pieces of a tooth and some bone.

Douglas pleaded not guilty, Monday.

Patti told the court that days after her then common-law husband's parents, the Likneses, had gone missing, she and her family came down to Calgary and Airdrie to be with their families.

She said it was during the first few days of July 2014 she saw a news photo of a vehicle thought to be related to their disappearance — a vehicle she recognized.

"It felt not good," she said, when asked how she felt when she saw the photo of what she believed to be her father's green Ford F150 used by her brother Douglas.

Patti said she then sent the photo to her husband, Allen Liknes, who forwarded it to police. She said he informed her police would be attending the Garland residence

Doreen Garland, mother of Douglas and Patti, also testified Tuesday, telling the court her son had very few — if any — friends. "He's my son, I love him and I've always loved him, but I think he's an unhappy man," she said.

Doreen also told the court that when she first saw the news of an Amber Alert involving the Likneses and their grandson she spoke to her son Douglas about it, but he showed little interest.

"He said, 'I don't want to talk about the Likneses,'" she said, adding that this had been his response about them since around 2007 when the working relationship between Alvin and Douglas soured.

The court heard from Archie Garland that when the business relationship had gone south, he told his son not to worry.

"I said it's just a bump in the road," said Archie.

But sister Doreen said her brother never let it go, even bringing it up to her and other family members at a family Christmas celebration in 2013.

It felt not good.
Patti Garland

Patti Garland, sister of Douglas Garland, leaves the Calgary Courts Complex after testifying at the murder trial for Douglas Garland in the June 2014 deaths of Alvin and Kathy Liknes and their five-year-old grandson Nathan O'Brien. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Families take stand

Both the families of the victims and the family of the accused have now taken the stand in the Douglas Garland triple-murder trial.

Douglas Garland, accused of three counts of first-degree murder in the disappearances of Alvin and Kathy Liknes and their five-year-old grandson Nathan O'Brien, pleaded not-guilty Monday.

On day one of the trial Nathan O'Brien's mother, Jennifer O'Brien took the stand, describing a gruesome bloody scene at her parents' place when she went to pick up Nathan after an impromptu sleepover June 29, 2014.

The court also heard from Alvin Liknes' son, Allen Liknes, on day one of the trial, who described a grudge held by Douglas Garland against his father stemming from work done on a oil and gas pump back in 2006-2007.

Day two of the trial brought testimony from three members of the Garland family: Douglas's mother, Doreen, father, Archie and sister Patti.

The Garland family confirmed Douglas was a "loner," but had never been violent in his life.

Patti also testified that she helped identify the truck wanted by police in relation to the disappearances as that of her father, but used by her brother.

Two Calgary Police service members are expected to take the stand on Wednesday for day three of the trial.

The crown is expected to call a total of 50 witnesses. The defence has not yet said whether or not they will present any evidence. LUCIE EDWARDSON/METRO

Vote delayed on golf course development

CITY COUNCIL

Upset citizens say builder not ready to move on concerns

Brodie Thomas
Metro | Calgary

After taking up the better part of a two-day meeting, city council chose to punt a decision on the Highland Park golf course development ahead to next Monday.

Councillors are wrestling with what went wrong after they sent the applicant — Maple Projects Inc. — back to consult more with residents who are opposed to losing the roughly 50 acres of green space and mature trees.

After spending several hours speaking with the proponent on Monday, council then had to hear from about 25 concerned citizens who complained that the developer really wasn't ready to budge on much when they were sent back to the table.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi said he was disturbed to hear from residents who said the developers told them they already had enough votes, and therefore wouldn't negotiate.

"I don't think it's true, to start with," said Nenshi. "Because I know that my colleagues do approach public hearings with an open mind.

"And I also know that on this particular issue ... they're really grappling with this."

He said he wasn't personally convinced the project was the best for the community.

"Frankly, there could have been a better project here that would have made the developer more money, and given the community more amenities," said Nenshi.

Coun. Shane Keating suggested the process had gone too far and that it might be best to let the developer go forward with the process, rather than write amendments.

"We're stuck spinning our tires in the mud here, your worship.

"And the longer we stay here, the deeper we're going to get and the more time we'll spend on this," he said.

With the possibility of a tie vote due to an absence, the matter was tabled to next Monday.

An artist's concept of the Highland Park Development.
COURTESY MAPLE PROJECTS

ENVIRONMENT

Provincial green incentives ahead

Environment Minister Shannon Phillips says energy efficiency programs to help Albertans save money will be available as early as March.

Phillips says the first initiatives will give home and business owners the chance to make fast and easy changes to reduce emissions and cut their energy bills.

> "You'll be able to go online and find out where you can pick up your new set of LED light bulbs."
> Shannon Phillips

"(They) will literally be standing in a (shopping) mall in front of an Energy Efficiency kiosk giving out those kinds of products," Phillips said in a speech Tuesday.

"They will be, in some cases, even going into neighbourhoods and knocking on doors and talking to people and giving them a low-flow showerhead, a direct-install right then and there.

"You'll also find that you'll be able to go online and find out where you can come and pick up your new set of LED light bulbs if you'd like to change them out."

Phillips said details are to be released in the next few weeks from the new provincial agency titled Energy Efficiency Alberta.

A second program will allow consumers to apply for rebates when they buy energy efficient appliances such as stoves, dishwashers and refrigerators.

A third program will provide businesses and non-profits rebates on larger energy efficient products such as boilers and heating and cooling systems.

Smaller-scale solar power programs will follow later, she said.

Alberta is the last jurisdiction to launch an energy efficiency program in Canada, but that means the province has been able to see what has worked elsewhere, Phillips said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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POLICE

Man dies in home invasion

Police say a man who was found in life-threatening condition at the scene of a suspected home invasion in Calgary involving gunfire has died.

Officers were called to a southeast neighbourhood around 8:00 p.m. Monday after numerous calls about a disturbance and a possible break-in.

Emergency medical officials say crews later found a man in his 30s with a gunshot wound to his abdomen and a woman who had serious injuries.

The man died in hospital while the woman, who officials say fell from a second-storey window, remains in care.

A third man who was at the scene had minor injuries.

Police have said they are looking for one or two suspects.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CRIME

Public help sought in Whitehorn stabbing

Police are looking for the public's help with information in a stabbing last week. Officers were called to the 100 block of Whitlock Close NE around 8 p.m. on Jan. 10 after reports an injured man was pushed out of a truck and on to a sidewalk. The man in his mid-30s had been badly beaten and stabbed, police said. He was transported to hospital in life-threatening condition, but has since been upgraded to stable. The vehicle was identified as a silver or grey Dodge Ram pickup. A truck of the same make and colour was found on fire later that evening.

METRO

Businesses promised details of tax relief

ECONOMY

Councillors to get closed-door briefing on options

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

Although council has made it clear that relief is coming for some businesses bludgeoned by the promise of a heavy tax bill, what's not clear is if $15 million will be enough to cut struggling companies property assessment values to a 5 per cent increase.

Councillors will be getting a closed-door briefing on what the city's options are to dole out the agreed $15 million in rainy day funding to "small businesses," ahead of next week's council meeting which will detail administration's proposal in full.

Coun. Peter Demong asked about a timeline on the relief, as he's had many concerns from businesses outside of the core. He also wondered what else, other than sending monetary relief, can be done to help businesses weather the economic storm.

This year, because one-third of downtown offices are sitting vacant, property assessments have followed making businesses outside of the core responsible for making up the city's revenue neutral calculations.

The result is springing many businesses into a whole new realm of taxation, which has caused uproar in the business community.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi said applying business tax breaks to small business only in a fair way is "devilishly complicated stuff." METRO FILE

"Council overwhelmingly supported the need to be able to cushion people in this year who've been hit by the assessment shift," said Mayor Naheed Nenshi to reporters on Monday. "I have not heard anything from my colleagues to suggest they've softened on that."

Last year, councillors voted to give small businesses relief from the city's stability reserve fund.

But the money hasn't been doled out yet because of "legislative difficulties." According to the mayor, the city is bound by the Municipal Government Act and aren't able to give one group relief over another.

One thing the mayor said he hadn't considered are the landlords who pay a large sum of taxes with several small businesses in their office locations.

"Because of the way net leases work and the property taxes flow through, we would not be able to capture all small businesses if we only looked at small business asset value," said Nenshi.

"But as I've said before this is devilishly complicated stuff."

PROPERTIES

- Nearly 30 per cent of Calgary's downtown offices are sitting vacant.
- Because of the slump in the economy, and city's need to be revenue neutral property values outside of the core are getting mega changes in their assessed values.
- Mayor Naheed Nenshi said approximately 1000 businesses are seeing a 30 per cent jump in assessment values.

ACCESSIBLITY

Delay upsets cabbies

The face of Calgary's accessible taxi fleet is changing, with the increasing costs, and diminishing perks for drivers who offer the needed service change is around the corner.

But council has decided to delay implementing recommendations of the accessible taxi review because of the potential changes transportation network companies pose, and some of the taxi community isn't pleased about it.

Council effectively voted to kick the report back to administration and complete an accessible transportation policy "scoping report," which would actually engage not only the accessible taxi system, but also Calgary Transit Access.

"I don't think they're really concerned with what's happening in accessible service," said Associated Cab owner Roger Richard, in an LTAC meeting. "Where do we stand on accessible service? We were all in line to make sure it was there and done properly … now we're back in limbo."

The accessible taxi review recommended that the accessible taxi service shift to the broker's responsibility. That means they would hold the accessible plates, which would no longer be limited, and bear the high costs drivers currently can't keep up.

But after a vote of council, that idea hangs in the balance of another accessible taxi service report.

The new report would address immediate impacts of transportation network services on the accessible taxi system, explore opportunities to collaborate on service for the accessible taxi community, and develop short term fixes for the increasing cost to taxi drivers helping bring accessible taxi services. HELEN PIKE/METRO

HEALTH

Filmmaker captures a lifetime of smoking in a single shot

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

A Calgary filmmaker is attempting to tell a smoker's lifelong journey, in a film with no edits, just continuous movement.

From first puff to last breath, director Paige Boudreau used her $10,000 Telus Storyhive contest winnings to create an interconnected set — allowing her to film in one shot, with no edits.

There's no dialogue either, just powerful and evocative imagery.

"I think shows like Mad Men really sensationalize cigarettes and show what people get out of them — the benefits I guess," explained Boudreau. "Then there are films where you just see the person dying of cancer, and the negative. I wanted to put those two together to show there isn't one without the other."

It's a story she's intimately familiar with: Boudreau lost both her parents to lung cancer from smoking.

In particular, she looked through old photos of her father, and saw a cigarette in his hand each time. In earlier years, it was fun — she said he looked cool, hiking, being out, puffing smoke. Then as the years passed, it became more of an embarrassment — the cigarettes were still in the pictures, but often her father would try to hide them from the view of the camera.

"For me dad, he knew that it was bad, but the reward he was getting from cigarettes was better than the negatives," Boudreau explained. "He didn't have any more positive coping mechanisms to replace that."

It's been a difficult story to tell — Boudreau also connected with health-care workers and more to make sure the story was accurate.

Up In Smoke will be available on Storyhive for online viewing on Feb 6. Viewers can vote to have it win among a pool of other entries in the second round Storyhive contest.

Up In Smoke was filmed in one continuous take with no dialogue.
COURTESY PAIGE BOUDREAU

Different actors embody Juliet at different points of the story, each representing their own version. AARON CHATHA/METRO

What's in a jazz number?

THEATRE

Dance company puts new spin on the Bard's iconic play

Aaron Chatha
Metro | Calgary

For this year's High Performance Rodeo, Decidedly Jazz Danceworks has taken on the unenviable task of translating Shakespeare's famous text to dance and body movement.

The cast is determined to keep Juliet and Romeo true to the spirit of the Bard. And it looks beautiful. A turn of a phrase becomes a turn of a heel, couplets become flips through the air and soliloquy's become gravity defying leaps and tests of true physical endurance.

> **It's pretty compelling to watch.**
> Cory Bowles

Four different dancers play the role of Juliet, each inhabiting the role at a different point during the play. Dancer Catherine Hayward takes control of our star-crossed lover near the end of the production. She sees herself as the strongest, most powerful and almost joyous version of Juliet, and proves it by proving the scaffolding – which is also holding up a four piece band – and hanging from it like a misty mountain top.

It's her most physically demanding scene.

"I'm bearing my body weight, holding it up on the scaffolding and climbing," Hayward explained. "So what happens is, my muscles get exhausted quite quickly. The concentration it takes to be exact and complete the movements — but also the physical strength of bearing your body weight of the course of seven to 10 minutes — it's a really difficult part of the show."

But it's worth it. Cory Bowles plays the narrator — plucking out dancers and assigning them roles in the play, and keeping the audience up to date, much like the Shakespearean chorus. Except this narrator plays an active role, in one scene spouting off cheesy pickup lines (modern day bad poetry he calls it) and handing the lovers masks, or enthralled by Juliet scaling the scaffold mountain.

"It's pretty compelling to watch because I'm right there during the whole thing, so I'm seeing the effort she's putting into it and delivering a certain text that's almost contradicting what she's doing. It's really quite moving for me," he said.

Juliet and Romeo runs from Jan 18 to 28 at the DJD Dance Centre.

Visit decidedlyjazz.com for more information.

LABOUR

Transit union pitches plan to save 80 jobs

Helen Pike
Metro | Calgary

While the city holds approximately $500 million in reserve funding, the Calgary Transit Union is disappointed they can't kick a few million to their workers in order to save 80 jobs.

In 2016, as the councillors heard findings of another Zero Based Review, which promised $2.7 million in savings, but asked that the city outsource positions in order to achieve the economy.

At the time the move was met with an uproar, as the union noted they weren't consulted in the review, which Mayor Naheed Nenshi agreed was a shortcoming.

In the end, council gave transit a deadline to find savings, or the jobs go.

But as the clock ticks toward that June 2017 deadline, Neil McKinnon, the union's executive vice-president said they've found savings of several hundred thousand dollars, but don't feel there will be savings when work is contracted out.

His example is the city's choice to outsource bus shelter maintenance — long story short, he says the union sees city employees picking up the contractor's slack when it's crunch time.

"There's a complete lack of accountability, and then there's the expense," McKinnon said. "The city has already started contracting some of these jobs out."

McKinnon said the wires are already getting crossed in these new contractor positions, and they've already resulted in safety issues where snow was dumped into the face of CTrains pulling into platforms.

"It should worry the citizens that this is going to happen, and it will happen more frequently," McKinnon said.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS VIA THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Donald Trump's clear plans to step away from carbon reduction commitments leaves Canada asking some serious questions about its carbon policy. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Will Canada quit low-carbon diet?

ALBERTA OIL

Trump threatens to leave Canada out in the cold

Todd Coyne
Alberta Oil

If there was any doubt that American electoral politics can affect the lives of Canadians, it was quickly put to rest last November. Ottawa was then in the midst of rolling out its ambitious plan for a nationwide carbon tax.

For Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, his government's carbon tax announcement was both a concrete and symbolic step toward meeting the Paris climate targets he signed at the UN last spring. But one month and one stunning U.S. election night later, Trudeau's call for a carbon tax on all Canadians landed like a loud and poorly timed punchline at a suddenly silent cocktail party.

Early on, the editors of Bloomberg News had touted the plan as one that deserved to be "widely copied." It now sounded to some like a global liability.

President-elect Donald Trump's victory shut down anyone still talking about the U.S. as a global leader on climate change. Shortly after his election win, Trump reaffirmed that his administration would kill America's participation in the Paris climate agreement.

Still, the bigger question is what a sudden lack of U.S. leadership on climate would mean for Canada and the rest of the world. The Alberta government was quick to downplay the significance of the U.S. welcoming a climate skeptic into the White House.

"The world will be carbon constrained regardless of one election in one country," Alberta climate minister Shannon Phillips told reporters during a November conference call from Morocco, where she was attending the latest UN climate summit.

But what if that one election just threw out the rule book for North American energy and trade regulations? And what if that one country happens to be your best customer and biggest competitor in the energy trade?

The situation puts Canada at risk of losing fossil fuel investment to its red tape-cutting neighbor, where prolific oil fields in places like the Permian Basin were already ramping up production long before any votes for a new president were cast.

The Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors forecasts that 4,665 oil and gas wells will be drilled in Canada this year, a 31 per cent increase from the 3,562 estimated in 2016. The 2017 forecast, however, was collected prior to Trump's victory, leading many to believe it is overly bullish on a Canadian recovery given the election of an American administration that's determined to take the regulatory gloves off and spur more investment in its own fossil fuel industries.

> **The world will be carbon constrained regardless of one election in one country.**
> Shannon Phillips

If the U.S. does take a go-it-alone approach on climate, and the rest of the world sticks to existing carbon constraints, the scenario could prove a net positive for Canada's energy services sector.

"The advantage Alberta has is we have all the technology to drill geothermal wells," says Brian Wagg, business developer at the Centre for Engineering Research (C-FER) Technologies in Edmonton. "We have basically been doing geothermal energy backwards for 30 years with SAGD and cyclic steam [stimulation]. We're injecting steam into the ground to heat it up, while geothermal is the exact inversion of that; you're injecting water into the ground to turn it into steam and bring it to the surface."

American renewable energy companies might lose considerable competitive advantage under the new Republican government. We can expect that will deliver a competitive edge to a handful of energy companies in Canada, where, despite a small population and subarctic weather, incentives for wind and solar technology, coupled with carbon disincentives, will likely be a mainstay for years to come.

Those development incentives, paired with the low Canadian dollar, will provide export opportunities for the most renewable energy-exposed Canadian firms. The question remains, however, just how big those opportunities will be and how many countries will stay serious about achieving responsible energy development and meeting their international climate targets.

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Clara Hughes

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MENTAL HEALTH

Advocate says the feds are failing First Nations kids

An outspoken child advocate is accusing the federal government of dragging its feet in implementing a funding principle aimed at ensuring all First Nations children are able to access necessary services.

At the heart of the dispute is Cindy Blackstock, a long-standing champion of the rights of indigenous children, and Jordan's principle — named for a five-year-old boy who died in hospital in 2005 as the federal and Manitoba governments squabbled over who should cover his home-care costs.

> **Mental health services are available for every other kid and they are not available to First Nations kids.**
> Cindy Blackstock

Blackstock is taking issue with documents from February 2016 that show the federal government explored different options for applying the principle, which holds that no indigenous child should suffer denials, delays or disruptions of health services available to other children due to jurisdictional disputes.

Ottawa was ordered to comply with the principle in January by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal after a nine-year battle led by Blackstock's group, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, and the Assembly of First Nations.

In the documents, the government describes the various choices as a "menu of possible options" for abiding by the tribunal's ruling, including the cost and policy ramifications of each.

There remains a chronic lack of mental health services for indigenous youth across Canada, Blackstock said. She cited the example of Wapekeka First Nation, a remote northern Ontario reserve where two 12-year-old girls died by suicide earlier this month.

"These mental health services are available for every other kid and they are not available to First Nations kids," she said. "The government knows about it and yet they are not paying for it, with tragic results."

For its part, the Liberal government says it is abiding by the tribunal's decision, citing the July announcement of $382 million over three years to help First Nations children living on reserve deal with disabilities or short-term conditions.

Health Canada is working to ensure resources are in place to reach families and identify all cases where First Nations children cannot access appropriate services, said Sony Perron, an assistant deputy minister of the department's First Nations and Inuit health branch.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

HALIFAX

Singer will perform anthem 150 times

Ameeta Vohra
For Metro | Halifax

In 2017, Peter Baylis is on a patriotic mission.

As a tribute to Canada's 150th birthday, Baylis has set his sights on completing a goal of singing the national anthem 150 times while raising money for Feed Nova Scotia.

"I wanted to contribute to Canada's 150th," the Halifax Mooseheads anthem singer explained. "It just dawned on me while I watching the news because there was a piece on the birthday; I wanted to participate and said, 'I will give this a shot.'

"It's a daunting task but I think I can achieve it."

Already this month, Baylis sang the anthem 14 times at various locations in the city including the Central Library, Point Pleasant Park and Halifax Shopping Centre.

Peter Baylis JEFF HARPER/METRO

For his 15th performance, Baylis dropped into the Metro Halifax office on Tuesday afternoon.

The community is also doing their part to help Baylis reach his goal.

He has been invited to events such as the Dartmouth Whalers game at the Dartmouth Sportsplex on Saturday and six convocation ceremonies at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) in June.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau fields questions at a town hall meeting in Fredericton on Tuesday. ANDREW VAUGHN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Trudeau keeping mum on vacation

POLITICS

Watchdog investigating use of private helicopter

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau refuses to say how many times he's been to the private Bahamian island of the Aga Khan, the billionaire spiritual leader who has been his family friend since he was a young boy.

Trudeau's recent secret family vacation to the tropical isle has prompted an investigation by the federal ethics commissioner, after opposition MPs complained the trip — which Trudeau admitted included a ride on the Aga Khan's private helicopter — broke the federal Conflict of Interest Act.

Speaking to reporters during a stop on his campaign-style public tour in Fredericton, N.B. on Tuesday, Trudeau also refused to say how many times he has accepted rides on private aircraft owned by the Aga Khan.

"This was a private vacation," the prime minister said in French, repeating what he has said for several days about his willingness to speak with ethics commissioner Mary Dawson about the trip.

> **My office is working with her office to organize the next steps and answer her questions.**
> Justin Trudeau

"My office is working with her office to organize the next steps and answer her questions," he said.

Questions about the trip have dogged Trudeau since his office admitted, after refusing to disclose anything about his vacation for several days, that the prime minister, his family and a few friends accepted an invitation to the Aga Khan's private Bell Island during the holidays.

In the face of media pressure, the Prime Minister's Office revealed that the friends on the trip were Newfoundland MP Seamus O'Regan, Liberal party president Anna Gainey and their spouses.

Trudeau has repeatedly justified the trip as a family vacation to visit a longtime friend. But the vacation has come under close scrutiny because of the Aga Khan's foundation in Canada, which has landed more than $300 million in government aid contracts since 2004.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CONSERVATIVES

O'Leary still mulling bid for leadership

Kevin O'Leary is refusing to confirm he's ready to join the Conservative leadership race Wednesday after months of testing the waters.

But the possibility that O'Leary, a businessman and reality television personality, will enter the race is being taken seriously by candidates vying to replace Stephen Harper. The CBC reported Tuesday night O'Leary would formally enter the race Wednesday.

Amy Mills, a spokeswoman for O'Leary's leadership "exploratory committee," refused to confirm or deny the report when reached by Torstar on Tuesday. Mills did confirm O'Leary is scheduled to give a number of media interviews to react to Tuesday night's Conservative French-language debate.

Kevin O'Leary speaks during the Conservative Party of Canada convention in Vancouver last May. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"He's going to be watching the French debate, and he's going to be commenting on the debate tomorrow, but other than that, he's still mulling his thoughts about whether or not he's going to enter the leadership," Mills said.

"I don't have anything to add, unfortunately."

Reached Tuesday evening, O'Leary refused to discuss the CBC report. Instead, he vented his "frustration" that the Conservative leadership field still has 13 people vying to replace Stephen Harper.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Manning's sentence commuted

WIKILEAKS

Former Army intelligence officer to be freed in May

President Barack Obama commuted the prison sentence of Chelsea Manning on Tuesday, allowing the Army intelligence officer who leaked scores of classified documents to go free nearly three decades early.

Manning, who will leave prison in May, was one of 209 inmates whose sentences Obama was shortening, a list that includes Puerto Rican nationalist Oscar Lopez-Rivera. Obama also pardoned 64 people, including retired Gen. James Cartwright, who was charged with making false statements during a probe into disclosure of classified information.

"These 273 individuals learned that our nation is a forgiving nation," said White House counsel Neil Eggleston, "where hard work and a commitment to rehabilitation can lead to a second chance, and where wrongs from the past will not deprive an individual of the opportunity to move forward."

U.S. President Barack Obama commuted the sentence of Chelsea Manning, who is serving 35 years behind bars for leaking classified documents. AFP/GETTY IMAGES

> **We are all better off knowing that Chelsea Manning will walk out of prison a free woman, dedicated to making the world a better place and fighting for justice for so many.** Chase Strangio, Manning's lawyer

The actions are permanent, and can't be undone by President-elect Donald Trump. White House officials said Obama would grant clemency to more individuals on Thursday - his final day in office - but that batch was not expected to include prominent individuals like Manning.

A former Army intelligence analyst, Manning has been serving a 35-year sentence for leaking more than 700,000 classified government and military documents to WikiLeaks, along with some battlefield video. She was convicted in military court in 2013 of six violations of the Espionage Act and 14 other offences and has spent more than six years behind bars. She asked Obama last November to commute her sentence to time served.

Known as Bradley Manning at the time of her 2010 arrest, Manning came out as transgender after being sentenced, and LGBT rights groups took up her cause and lobbied the president to grant her clemency. She was held at a men's prison in Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and filed a transgender prisoner rights lawsuit, although the military did approve gender-reassignment hormone therapy.

She attempted suicide twice last year, according to her lawyers, citing her treatment in prison. Manning has acknowledged leaking the documents, but has she did it to raise public awareness about the effects of war on civilians.

White House officials said the president was inclined to grant clemency to Manning because she had expressed remorse for her crimes and had served several years of her sentence. The officials briefed reporters on a conference call on condition of anonymity. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GLOBAL DIGEST

AUSTRALIA

Minister defends end of hunt for MH370

Australia's Transport Minister Darren Chester said on Wednesday that experts will continue analyzing data and scrutinizing debris washing ashore from Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in a bid to narrow down where it crashed in the southern Indian Ocean. But Chester declined to specify what kind of breakthrough would convince officials to resume the search for the missing airliner that was suspended this week after almost three fruitless years of searching. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHINA

Nine workers killed after cave-in at coal mine

The partial collapse of a coal mine in northern China has left nine people dead, state media reported Wednesday, reflecting the stubborn persistence of safety problems despite years-long efforts to reduce deaths in the sprawling sector. The people killed were doing maintenance inside the shaft when it collapsed. Rescuers saved one person, who is stable in hospital. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GOVERNMENT

Number of Democrats boycotting inauguration swells

The roster of House Democrats planning to boycott President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration grew to about 50 on Tuesday in a protest of the New York businessman's policies and his repeated criticism of legendary civil rights activist John Lewis.

The Georgia congressman made headlines over the weekend for challenging Trump's legitimacy to be the next president and erroneously claiming that Trump's inauguration would be the first he will have missed since coming to Congress three decades ago.

In fact, Lewis had skipped President George W. Bush's inauguration in 2001.

Trump struck on Tuesday morning, as is typical, on Twitter: "WRONG (or lie)!" Trump tweeted, citing a 2001 Washington Post report that noted Lewis had skipped George W. Bush's inauguration.

Lewis' office on Tuesday confirmed that the congressman had missed Bush's swearing-in.

"His absence at that time was also a form of dissent," said spokeswoman Brenda Jones. "He did not believe the outcome of that election, including the controversies around the results in Florida and the unprecedented intervention of the U.S. Supreme Court, reflected a free, fair and open democratic process."

Lewis said last week that he would skip Trump's swearing in on Friday, telling NBC News that he didn't view Trump as a legitimate president.

"I think the Russians participated in helping this man get elected. And they helped destroy the candidacy of Hillary Clinton," Lewis said in an interview with NBC's "Meet the Press" that aired Sunday.

Lewis' comments drew angry weekend tweets from Trump, who wrote that "rather than falsely complaining about the election results," Lewis should focus on his congressional district.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., also weighed in, telling a Milwaukee Fox television affiliate Tuesday that Trump "won this election fair and square" and that Democrats were wrong "to try and inject some kind of claim of illegitimacy on the dawn of a new presidency."

The number of Democrats boycotting Trump's inauguration continued to increase, including Minnesota Rep. Keith Ellison, a top contender to lead the Democratic National Committee, as well as many black and Hispanic lawmakers. Top Democrats like House Minority leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York will attend, however, and none of the Senate Democrats said they'll skip the inauguration. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PROTEST

A federal appeals court says protesters planning to demonstrate against President-elect Donald Trump can't gather on key portions of the inaugural parade route.

The ruling Tuesday upholds National Park Service regulations that say most of the area known as Freedom Plaza and the sidewalks in front of the Trump International Hotel are limited to bleacher seating. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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NOTICE OF HEARING FOR PERMANENT GUARDIANSHIP ORDER TO:

Terra Lewis

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A Director, under the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act will make an application for: **Permanent Guardianship Order;** of your child born on **January 17, 2000.** If you wish to speak to this matter in court, you MUST appear in court on this date. You do have the right to be represented by a lawyer. If you do not attend in person or by a lawyer, an Order may be made in your absence and the Judge may make a different Order than the one being applied for by the Director. You will be bound by any Order the Judge makes.

You do have the right to appeal the Order within 30 days from the date the Order is made.

Contact: Jackie Ellice; Leanne Baines; Daniella Eggink
Calgary Region, Child and Family Services
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Luis Alberto Rodriguez shows a photo of his children while waiting for a friend to pick him up from temporary housing in Miami. Rodriguez wept when he heard that a government policy granting residency to Cubans who arrive on U.S. soil was ending. ADRIANA GOMEZ/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

'It was such a shock'

IMMIGRATION

Cubans bemoan end of 'wet foot, dry foot' policy

In a hotel room in suburban Miami, Luis Alberto Rodriguez wept when he heard that a government policy granting residency to Cubans who arrive on U.S. soil was ending. That means it could take two years or more before his wife and two children still in Cuba can legally join him here.

Rodriguez arrived in Laredo, Texas, on New Year's Eve, a journey that took him through 10 countries. He had hoped his family would be able to follow shortly afterward, maybe flying to Mexico before walking across the border under the "wet foot, dry foot" policy that sent back Cubans intercepted at sea but gave those who reached land an automatic path to legal residency.

"It was exhilarating finally making it onto U.S. soil, and then a whirlwind of emotions days later," when news came that the policy would end, Rodriguez said. "It was such a shock. … I don't know when I will see them."

On Thursday, a little more than two years after Cuba and the U.S. began re-establishing diplomatic relations, President Barack Obama decided to end the "wet foot, dry foot" policy, moving yet another step closer to normalizing ties that had been frozen for nearly a half-century.

The change forces Cubans to follow the same rules as immigrants from other countries, formally applying for legal immigration status and waiting their turn behind a long list of people who applied before them.

Cuban leaders were not the only ones irritated by the "wet foot, dry foot" policy. It also rankled an increasing number of U.S. elected officials, who accused some Cuban immigrants of abusing their privileges by claiming benefits under federal aid programs even if they returned to Cuba to live. Millions of dollars were defrauded from Medicare that way, they said.

Cubans' special status also angered immigrants from other countries, including those who felt they faced the same kinds of political challenges at home that Cubans had faced under the late Fidel Castro and his brother Raul Castro. Moreover, they said, many Cubans, particularly in recent years, went to the U.S. primarily for economic opportunities, not because of persecution.

"For the longest time, Cubans have had all the privileges here," said Honduran immigrant Mario Hernandez as he walked outside a busy bookstore in Miami with his wife, daughter and grandchildren. Some Cubans have become millionaires, Hernandez said.

"No one enjoys as many advantages. But hopefully there will be no more of that."

Haitian community leaders unsuccessfully lobbied the U.S. government for years to extend a similar "wet foot, dry foot" to Haitian migrants fleeing poverty and political persecution.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

AFRICA

State of emergency declared in Gambia

Gambia's President Yahya Jammeh declared a state of emergency on Tuesday, just two days before he is supposed to cede power after losing elections last month.

The longtime leader is refusing to step down despite international pressure and the threat by other West African nations of a military intervention.

The 90-day state of emergency, announced on state television, was to begin immediately. It bans all residents and citizens from "any acts of disobedience" or violence and urges security forces to maintain order.

In the announcement, Jammeh also blamed what he called the unprecedented level of foreign involvement in Gambia's election. The National Assembly, in approving the state of emergency, condemned the "unlawful and malicious interference" by the African Union's Peace and Security Council, which has said the continental body will no longer recognize Jammeh as Gambia's legitimate leader as of Thursday.

President-elect Adama Barrow, the man who ousted Jammeh in the December election, is vowing to take power on Thursday despite Jammeh's refusal to leave.

Jammeh says the country must wait for Gambia's supreme court to decide on the ruling party's challenge to the election results, a delay that could take months.

On Monday, Gambia's chief justice recused himself and said he could not rule on Jammeh's request for an injunction blocking Barrow's inauguration.

Meanwhile, members of Jammeh's cabinet are fleeing. Gambia's foreign affairs minister, along with the ministers of finance, trade and environment, all have resigned, a political official in Banjul said Tuesday. The official spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals.

West Africa's regional bloc has a standby force for possible military intervention if Jammeh doesn't step down when his mandate ends. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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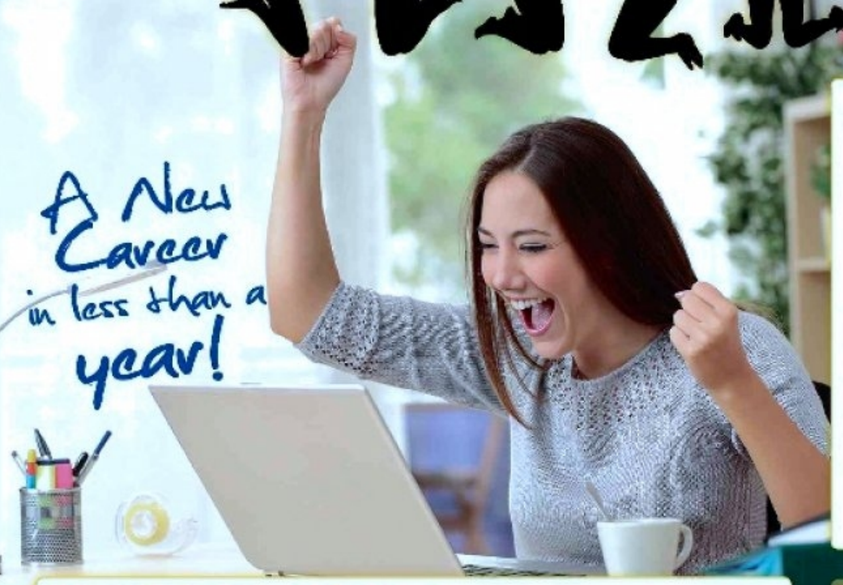

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Cost rises to insure loans

MORTGAGES

Fed housing agency's move aims to cool market: Expert

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) President and CEO Evan Siddall addresses the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade in November. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Canada's federal housing agency is hiking the cost of mortgage loan insurance for homebuyers starting March 17, as part of new regulatory requirements requiring it to hold more capital to offset risks in the country's red-hot real estate market.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. said Tuesday it doesn't anticipate the increases will have a "significant impact" on homebuyers and expects the changes will add about $5 to a monthly mortgage payment for those with an average CMHC-insured loan of approximately $245,000.

But taken together with other changes recently put in place in an effort to cool down Canada's housing market, James Laird, co-founder of interest rate-comparison website RateHub, says the CMHC increase will have an effect on homebuyers, particularly those who will be purchasing property for the first time

"This is the latest in a long string of regulations brought down by the federal government making it more difficult to enter the housing market," said Laird, citing higher down payment requirements, higher qualifying interest rates and shorter amortization periods introduced last year.

"It's clear by the government's actions through 2016, and by this move, that they continue to be concerned about an overheating housing market. So once again, this is another move to make it more difficult to buy."

CMHC says the new premium changes are calculated based on the loan-to-value ratio of the mortgage being insured. The size of the increase in rates depends on that ratio.

For instance, new homeowners who make a down payment between five to 9.99 per cent can expect an increase of $6.59 to their monthly mortgage if their loan is $350,000.

For the same loan amount, those with a 10 to 14.99 per cent down payment face an increase of $11.52 a month, while those with a down payment between 15 to 19.99 per cent will pay $16.46 more a month.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

DOWN PAYMENT

- Lenders typically require mortgage loan insurance when a homebuyer makes a down payment of less than 20 per cent.
- The cost can be paid in a single lump sum, but CMHC says the amount is often added to the mortgage principal and repaid over the life of the loan.

AIR TRAVEL

Glitch disrupts flights

Air Canada saw its operations disrupted by a computer glitch Tuesday that resulted in delayed flights and cancellations.

The Montreal-based airline said the IT system hardware problem was resolved by the afternoon, but not before it caused problems at airports and online.

Several Air Canada flights departing from its hub at Toronto's Pearson International Airport and Montreal's Trudeau International Airport were cancelled.

On its website, the airline said some of the flights were affected by adverse weather including freezing rain. However, it also acknowledged that "a small handful" of flights were cancelled because of the outage.

The troubles came days after Toronto-based Porter Airlines experienced a computer outage that saw forced a 2.5-hour ground stop Saturday. Five Porter flights were cancelled and about 400 passengers had to alter their travel plans.

Several U.S. airlines suffered problems last fall after a computer outage at a company that runs airline technology systems.

American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, JetBlue Airways, Alaska Airlines and Virgin America said a technology glitch briefly interrupted their operations.

Airlines rely on complex computer programs to handle everything from selling tickets to checking weight calculations before takeoff. When outages occur, they often lead to cascading delays that can linger for hours.

"They all run very complex computer systems and so these are the things that from time to time do occur," said airline analyst Chris Murray of AltaCorp Capital. "There's no real pattern that you've seen of there being a systematic issue here."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

FORT MCMURRAY

Wildfire impact reaches $9.5 billion, study finds

An assessment of the total financial impact of last spring's Fort McMurray wildfire is pegging the direct and indirect costs of the blaze at almost $10 billion.

The $9.9-billion figure includes the expense of replacing buildings and infrastructure as well as lost income, profits and royalties in the oilsands and forestry industries, said MacEwan University economist Rafat Alam.

It also includes early estimates on indirect costs such as environmental damage, lost timber and physical and mental-health treatment for residents and firefighters.

The estimate will go even higher, Alam said Tuesday.

Alam said it can take up to 10 years to get a complete picture of everything that happened and what it cost.

Earlier this year, insurers estimated they'd be paying out about $3.7 billion for damage caused by the blaze which firefighters came to call "the beast."

But that's only the start, said Alam, who conducted the study for the Institute for Catastrophic Loss Reduction, an insurance industry research group.

"There are other losses like loss of revenue for the provincial government and municipality. There are costs for evacuation. There are costs for rehabilitation. These are examples of other direct costs that are not part of the insurance bureau estimation."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

PC Alberta

NOTICE OF DELEGATE SELECTION MEETING FOR PCAA LEADERSHIP

CALGARY – BUFFALO

Date: Wednesday February 15, 2017
Time: 5:00 PM
Location: Grace Presbyterian Church
1009 – 15 Ave SW, Calgary, AB T2R 0S5

If you want to become a delegate for the upcoming leadership convention in Calgary, Alberta on March 17 – 19, 2017 please send a notice of interest to your DRO, Susan Elliott at catalyst.mgt@shaw.ca by February 8th by 12:00PM (Noon).

In order to be a delegate nominee or voting member, you must attend the meeting in person, meet all eligibility requirements and hold a membership for at least 14 days prior to the meeting date (11:59PM on January 31st, 2017). As well, those wanting to be a delegate nominee will be asked to speak at the meeting.

More details available at www.pcalberta.org

EATING OUT

McDonald's Canada adds nuts to menu

McDonald's Canada has started serving its first food containing peanuts or tree nuts not in an individual, sealed package, a move critics say reverses its long-standing position as a safe place for people with food allergies.

The company introduced a Skor McFlurry that contains chopped almonds in the pieces of chocolate bar used to make the frozen treat.

McDonald's said on its website that this means all of its other products may contain or come in contact with peanuts, tree nuts or other allergens. Prior to this, the company only served individually packaged peanuts and tree nuts.

People with food allergies can have an anaphylactic reaction when they come in contact with a food they can't consume. Anaphylaxis, which may be fatal, can cause hives, swelling of the tongue, breathing troubles, shock and other problems.

McDonald's prior policy made it "kind of a go-to place" for many families that have to accommodate a member's nut allergy when dining out, said Beatrice Povolo, the director of advocacy for Food Allergy Canada, a non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of people with food allergies.

McDonald's said the Skor McFlurry is the first of more products to come that will contain non-packaged peanuts or tree nuts as an ingredient.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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JESSICA ALLEN ON PROTESTS OVER HOLLYWOOD CASTING

It never ceases to surprise that television and movie producers keep feigning shock and innocence when accusations of white-washing shower down on them.

The outrage over casting Joseph Fiennes, a white English actor, as Michael Jackson, an African-American pop star, in a new British satirical television series, Urban Myths, started a year ago. It crescendoed last week when Jackson's daughter, Paris, tweeted that the newly released trailer featuring Fiennes in facial prosthetics made her "want to vomit."

In an unusual twist, Urban Myths' broadcaster, Sky Arts, responded to the backlash and shelved the episode, in which MJ, Marlon Brando, and Elizabeth Taylor take a post-9/11 road trip. Too bad, because I'd really like to see Brian Cox play Brando and Stockard Channing channel Liz.

But I get it. What's surprising is that television and movie producers keep feigning shock and innocence when accusations of white-washing shower down on them.

This example, of course, is more complicated than most. Many pointed out that an African-American actor would've had to undergo just an extreme transformation — if not more — as Fiennes did to play Jackson.

We can't ask Jackson's opinion. But in a 1993 interview with Oprah, he was very clear about his racial identity. Winfrey went through a laundry list of tabloid stories — the oxygen chamber, procuring the Elephant Man's bones — while Jackson explained why they were nonsense. Then she got to the rumour about him wanting a white boy to play him in a commercial. "That is so stupid," he said, exasperated. "That is the most ridiculous horrifying story I've ever heard. It's crazy. Why would I want a white child to play me? I'm a black American. I'm proud to be a black American. I am proud of my race. I am proud of who I am."

I wouldn't be surprised if the folks involved with Urban Myths never saw that interview, though it was the most watched in television history. But it's impossible that they wouldn't be aware that casting Fiennes would be contentious.

Joseph Fiennes, as Michael Jackson, and Stockard Channing, as Elizabeth Taylor, appear in a scene from a shelved episode of the British TV series "Urban Myths." CONTRIBUTED

It's easier to give old Hollywood a pass, as we do when grandpa Doug calls Asians "Orientals." Things were different back them: John Wayne played Genghis Khan, Laurence Olivier played Othello, and Katharine Hepburn took a turn as Jade Tan, a Chinese woman, in Dragon Seed.

But deciding to cast Joel Edgerton as Ramses II and Christian Bale as Moses, for example, in 2014's Exodus? Or Jake Gyllenhaal as the Prince of Persia? Or having a white man save jazz in La La Land?

On one hand, some of these movies wouldn't have gotten made without a bankable A-lister. (In the case of Aloha, Cameron Crowe's 2015 execrable film starring Emma Stone as a character of Hawaiian and Chinese decent, that might not have been a bad thing.) And the pool from which A-listers are drawn is very white.

On the other, people in power could lead by example: "If eight white men — Wes Anderson, David O. Russell, Richard Linklater, Steven Soderbergh, the Coen Brothers, Quentin Tarantino and Woody Allen — were to commit to diverse casting, the Oscar conversation would be totally different," author and journalist Jeff Yang told IndieWire in a roundtable last year pegged to #OscarSoWhite. "Each of these guys can literally choose to cast anyone they want, with little opposition from money guys or studios."

Confession here: I used to get so excited when people would include Elizabeth Taylor as Cleopatra on Hollywood white-washing lists because it meant I could finally put my classics degree to use. "Cleopatra was an Egyptian pharaoh, the last actually," I'd say, smugly. "But she was Macedonian, descended from Alexander the Great's general Ptolemy."

More recently, however, when the same outrage surfaced over the idea of Angelina Jolie playing the Queen of the Nile, I paused.

I'm not sure sanctimonious historical arguments like my old chestnut about Cleo hold much sway today. When we talk about this type of casting, we're talking as much about how we live now as about the who, what, where and when of the subject. And anyone who rolls their eyes at that would be well advised to remember the wounded outrage of angry men throwing racial epithets at Leslie Jones because a woman put on a proton pack or those who felt there was no place for John Boyega, a black English actor, in The Force Awakens — and told him so. There are literally green people in that galaxy far, far away.

Whether a story takes place a long time ago or in recent memory, remember what William Faulkner once wrote: "The past is never dead. It isn't even past."

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

ACTIVIST WISDOM Know your history!

"Must we reinvent the wheel, or have we been in a similar situation before? Building a sense of history is important for today's activists. History isn't just what came before; it's a process of working through and evaluating things in our own contexts, with our own insights. From looking at earlier periods, struggles, strategies, gains and defeats, we can better understand how power is reproduced and find weaknesses and contradictions in the system." - Prof. Aziz Choudry, author of Learning Activism: The Intellectual Life of Contemporary Social Movements

VICKY MOCHAMA

All for one, one for all? Not quite

The Women's March on Saturday will bring together women — and men, FYI — from across the globe to protest Donald Trump's presidency.

From the outset, however, the march's effort to rally women echoed a history of fissures and fractures within the feminist movement.

Separately but simultaneously, two women — Bob Bland, a fashion designer in New York and Teresa Shook, a grandmother in Hawaii — conceived of a protest in the nation's capital.

Despite their eagerness, neither woman was a professional organizer. Further, the march was called the Million Woman March. Almost immediately, women of colour criticized the event for failing to be inclusive; racialized women with experience planning mass protests could have anticipated the obstacles. For black women especially, the name was a copycat of a 1997 march for black women which, it seemed, organizers had not known about.

The organizers quickly put women of colour at the top of the organizing committee.

But longstanding grievances had already been aired.

During the election, the Clinton campaign tied the candidate's trajectory to the 1848 Women's Rights Conventions in Seneca Falls. No women of colour were present at that meeting. (Only Frederick Douglass, a black man, was present.) By frequently citing this moment, Clinton evoked a history based on intentionally excluding women of colour.

In the activist era of the '60s and '70s, this brand of white feminism entered mainstream politics. Betty Friedan's Feminist Mystique may have given voice to "the problem that has no name" but she was also vocal in excluding lesbians. While white feminists campaigned for (some) women's rights on education, work and reproduction, they were, as a whole, nowhere to be found on civil rights.

Race, sexuality and gender are still contentious within feminism. You might call it in-fighting but it's really a push for accountability. Big or small, each conflagration among feminists is necessary to creating more a inclusive and effective movement. So-called infighting is essential for reminding us that modern feminism is still, and always will be, a work in progress.

When Lena Dunham complained that Odell Beckham Jr., a receiver for the New York Giants, had ignored her because she wasn't a model, black women called her out for perpetuating a dangerous myth about black male sexuality. Dunham — along with Amy Schumer, whom Dunham was interviewing about how great they both are — then asked Xavier Burgin, a black male filmmaker to talk the issue through with them.

Nearly 170 years after Seneca Falls, white feminists chose to listen to a black man rather than black women.

As the buses roll into D.C., remember that a common enemy doesn't quite mean we are all on the same team.

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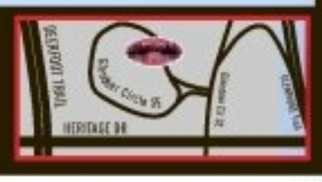

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metro LIFE
Your essential daily news
Wednesday, January 18, 2017

As she celebrated her birthday Tuesday, Betty White says the best thing about being 95 is that she's still employed.

Tired, envious and gassy: Welcome to the 10-day detox

Despite a lack of evidence they're good for you, detox programs are wildly popular. Wanting to get a healthy start in January after gaining 16 pounds in 2016, **Melissa Dunne** decides to try one anyway.

Cold-pressed juice cleanses are no longer in style. Lately, editors at fashion bible Vogue, and other trendsetters, are preaching slightly less severe measures. Detoxes that focus on preparing and eating whole foods are being hocked by everyone from celebrities to fit nutritionists and cookbook authors such as Joy McCarthy and Melissa Hartwig.

Hartwig, in particular, has gained a cult following — with her The Whole30 book spending 66 weeks and counting on The New York Times bestseller list. Acolytes of hers, and similar programs, are generally not allowed to consume a long list of foods, drinks, and additives for 30 days. Many programs also offer a 10-day, or even two-day, detox plans.

If you do manage to stick with Hartwig's 30-day program, her website promises it "will change your life." But, registered dietitian Andrea Miller warns people need to be wary of such promises.

"There is no solid scientific research on detoxes, it's mostly anecdotal information," said Miller in a phone interview from Whitby, Ont. "I advise my clients to look at the source and ask themselves: 'Does (the person selling the detox) have something to gain from this?'"

The nutrition expert also points out that there is generally no need for healthy people to do a detox program as our bodies already naturally detox via our kidneys and liver. Which doesn't mean Miller is staunchly against the concept, saying that if a program helps some people get in the habit of preparing and eating more whole foods on a regular basis, then that can be a good thing.

What's not such a good thing is the temporary nature of detoxes, she warns. Programs with strict rules means many adherents may white-knuckle their way through a time-based plan only to inevitably return to their unhealthy eating habits the minute it's over.

Beyond the end of January, Miller recommends setting some SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and trackable) nutrition and fitness goals you can reach throughout 2017.

Now that sounds like a smart plan most of us could stick to for longer than 30 days.

> **There is no solid scientific research on detoxes.**
> Andrea Miller, dietician

DETOX DELIGHTS Melissa Dunne's ten-day program mixed DIY dishes and adapted store-bought bowls. MELISSA DUNNE

GOOP OR JOYOUS? TWO DETOXES YIELDING SIMILAR RESULTS

Why Melissa Dunne's first 10 days of 2016 were a struggle

For me, last year was an *annus horribilis*.

The cherry on my misery sundae was that I ended 2016 exactly 16 pounds heavier than a mere year earlier. Admittedly, I had been eating too much ice cream to soothe my frayed nerves. So, in a bid to start this year with fewer sundaes and more smoothies, I did a 10-day detox.

For the first five days of 2017 I followed the plan from Goop Clean Beauty, written by the editors of Gwyneth Paltrow's lifestyle publication.

The rules were, no: alcohol, caffeine, dairy, eggs, beef, pork, shellfish, raw fish, gluten, soy, nightshades, strawberries, oranges, grapefruits, grapes, bananas, corn, white rice, sugar, peanuts, processed oils, and processed butters.

Thankfully, I then consciously uncoupled from that detox for the remaining five days, following the rules in the new book Joyous Detox by Joy McCarthy.

These rules were, no: refined sugar, artificial sweeteners, dairy, gluten, peanuts, unfermented soy, corn, alcohol, coffee, and genetically modified organisms.

On both detoxes I had throbbing headaches; felt constantly exhausted; burned with jealousy when my friends gorged on snacks; and spent an inordinate amount of time on the ceramic throne. Mistakes? I made a few (like not realizing there is caffeine in decaf coffee).

In the end, I lost a measly two pounds. But, what I did gain was a renewed belief that I am strong enough to make this year better than the last.

That may sound a little corny to some, but after not being able to eat corn for a week and a half I'll take what I can get.

READ MELISSA DUNNE'S FULL DETOX DIARY AT METRONEWS.CA

CANADIAN SCREEN AWARDS

Dolan, Orphan Black ahead of the pack

Montreal director Xavier Dolan's Oscar hopeful It's Only the End of the World and Space's human cloning series Orphan Black lead the pack going into this year's Canadian Screen Awards.

Dolan's French-language drama, about a dying writer who returns home to his estranged family, topped the film category with nine nominations. They include best picture, best director, best adapted screenplay and best actor for French star Vincent Cassel.

It's Only the End of the World is one of nine features being considered for a best foreign language film nomination at this year's Academy Awards.

On the TV side, Orphan Black leads with 14 nominations, including best dramatic series, best direction, and best actress for Regina native Tatiana Maslany. The Emmy winner is also up for a second award, for best actress in a film for The Other Half.

The awards honour film, television and digital media titles in 134 categories and represent voices from across Canada, said organizers.

"I just think it's pretty incredible that our motion picture category has films in four different languages," said Beth Janson, CEO of the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television, after the nominations were announced on Tuesday.

Other films with multiple nominations include the biopic Race, about American track star Jesse Owens, which is up for eight trophies including best picture and best actor for Toronto's Stephan James.

Tied with six nominations apiece are: Bruce McDonald's black-and-white coming-of-age tale Weirdos, Matt Johnson's fake moon-landing documentary Operation Avalanche and Chloe Leriche's Before the Streets, about an indigenous teen seeking redemption.

They're all up for best picture, a field that also includes: Louis Belanger's marijuana comedy Bad Seeds; Kevan Funk's hockey drama Hello Destroyer; Johnny Ma's Chinese taxi driver thriller Old Stone; Zacharias Kunuk's Arctic epic Searchers; and Those Who Make Revolution Halfway Only Dig Their Own Graves, by Mathieu Denis and Simon Lavoie.

Xavier Dolan's It's Only The End of the World earned nine Canadian Screen Awards nominations. GETTY IMAGES FILE

The awards show will be broadcast live on CBC from Toronto's Sony Centre for the Performing Arts on March 12. Canadian comedian Howie Mandel will host. THE CANADIAN PRESS

LIQUID ASSETS PETER ROCKWELL

This true American icon will Trump the new leader

Whatever Dante's Inferno type scenario gets unleashed this Friday when Donald J. Trump is sworn in as president of the United States, I have no doubt that the majority of the world will be crying into a large glass of something alcoholic.

Odds are Trump will be popping a few corks of sparkling wine from the family's eponymous winery his son runs in Virginia. It's unlikely you'll find a bottle on this side of the border easily if you're a supporter. They only appear to export their surprisingly decent tasting stuff to Alberta.

Better to indulge in a drop made by a true American winemaking celebrity like Robert Mondavi. The late Californian was an undisputed pioneer whose forward-thinking and class continues to inspire winemakers around the world.

His namesake 2014 Private Selection Cabernet Sauvignon ($15.99-$19.99) is lightly oaked and made from grapes grown throughout the Golden State. Rich, dark and chewy, it's ideal with red meats, and with the amalgamation in mind, a full serving of baloney.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

APPLE UPGRADE

Take a bite and add more Pazazz to your palate

Move over Honeycrisp, the next generation has arrived and it's full of Pazazz!

After 10 years of development, the new apple with the crunchy texture of its Honeycrisp mom and its very own burst of sweet-tart flavour is available from now until the end of February.

Deep red with a creamy yellow or white background, Pazazz has inherited the delicate cell structure of its Honeycrisp parent, which revolutionized the apple industry back in 1991 by combining a sweet flavour with a supercrisp, super- juicy texture.

Pazazz is not genetically modified, it was developed using traditional breeding methods. It is not being grown in Ontario because its breeders feel that, like Honeycrisp, it grows better in Nova Scotia's cooler climate.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ROSE REISMAN THE SAVVY EATER

THIS WEEK: Which of these soft Italian cheeses is hard on the fat counter?

An easy substitution between these two cheeses can make for lighter dishes.

PICK THIS

Tre Stelle Extra Smooth Ricotta (per 55g)

Calories 90
Fat 6g
Saturated Fat 4g

SKIP THIS

Tre Stelle Mascarpone (per 55g)

Calories 170
Fat 15g
Saturated Fat 10g

HERE'S WHY

Equivalent to an Arby's Classic Roast Beef Sandwich in fat.

Mascarpone is a rich cheese made from cream and is a favourite ingredient for desserts, most notably the Italian dish Tiramisu. The creamy cheese is also used in pastas, risottos, sauces, cheesecakes and as a topping for soups. However, its decadent nature means high amounts of calories, fat and artery-clogging saturated fat. Ricotta, made from milk and whey, is a much lighter alternative to cook and bake with; it has about half the calories and fat of mascarpone.

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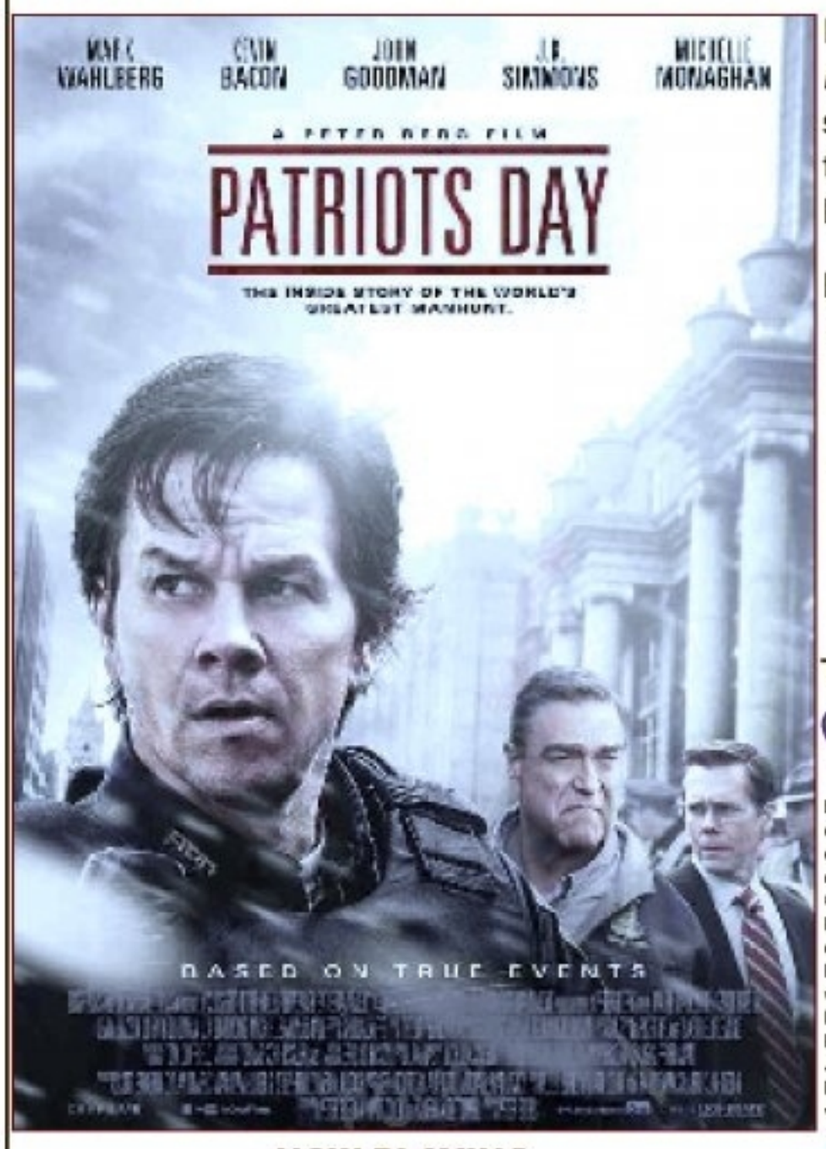

NOW PLAYING

In honour of *Patriots Day*, we're sending one winner to experience a little bit of Boston Strong.

Prize includes:
- A two night stay for two at the W Boston
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JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Unsettling...and made for our anxious times

THE SHOW: A Series of Unfortunate Events, Season 1, Episode 2 (Netflix)
THE MOMENT: "We're all frightened"

Neil Patrick Harris's money-craving Count Olaf adds to the sense of unease in A Series of Unfortunate Events. CONTRIBUTED

The brilliant, plucky Baudelaire children — tweens Violet (Malina Weissman) and Klaus (Louis Hynes), and baby Sunny (Presley Smith) — believe their parents died in a fire. They've been taken in — kidnapped — by Count Olaf (Neil Patrick Harris), an evil actor who craves their fortune. Behind the scenes, mysterious good guys Jacquelyn (Sara Canning) and Gustav (Luke Camilleri) plot via phone.

"Dr. Montgomery was supposed to be their new guardian," Gustav says. "What went wrong?"

"Mr. Poe listened to the advice of a consultant," Jacquelyn says.

"A consultant!" Gustav exclaims. "Dear God, why would anyone listen to a consultant! The children must be frightened."

"We're all frightened, Gustav," Jacquelyn replies.

Meanwhile in their attic chamber, Klaus and Violet talk. "Sunny must be so frightened," Klaus says.

"We're all frightened, Klaus," Violet replies.

I'm ambivalent about the Lemony Snicket books this series is based on (by Daniel Handler, who also writes the show). The writing is clever, but smug about its cleverness. The pileup of unfortunate events, which are frustratingly preventable, make me anxious. The message — that pluck and resourcefulness can ease, though not always conquer, depressing situations — is true, but sad. I'm having the same struggles with the series.

I do, however, marvel at how prescient it feels for this anxious moment in time. Uninformed people acting in error because they listened to the wrong advice? Marginalized good guys wondering how to fix things? A conscienceless money-grubber who kidnapped us when we were meant to have a proper, qualified guardian?

We're all frightened, world.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

Carrey savours return to where it all began

TV SERIES

Actor takes a walk down memory lane for new show

Jim Carrey is standing on the steps of the Ice House, the legendary comedy club that helped launch a thousand careers, including his own.

"Man, those were the days," says Carrey, impish grin showing through a Duck Dynasty-worthy beard. "The last time I was here doing stand up was maybe more than 20 years ago with Roseanne Barr. That was a long time ago."

It's also a long way from Newmarket, Ont., where Carrey was born. He would come to Hollywood seeking fame — eventually becoming one of the highest-paid actors in the world starting with movies such as The Mask and Ace Ventura, and then more critical work such as Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind.

But this is the type of club that Carrey would hone his craft, waiting for that shot at fame. The walls of the Ice House are lined with framed photos of his contemporaries and the greats who performed in a dingy room that has seen better days, including David Letterman, George Carlin, Jerry Seinfeld and Steve Martin.

But would Carrey ever do stand up again?

"I don't know. I wouldn't make a rule against it, I kind of go with the flow and what the universe wants me to do. I don't have any desire to do it right now."

Jim Carrey steps out on to familiar ground — the close confines of the Ice House comedy club in LA. TONY WONG

In homage to his earlier days, Carrey is making an appearance at the club, but this time as a client. He's the executive producer of Showtime's I'm Dying Up Here, partly based on his life experiences and the infamous 1970's stand-up comedy scene. The show has a winning ensemble, including Academy Award winning actress Melissa Leo as a gritty club owner.

Carrey takes to the tiny stage to introduce the cast. But, despite earlier protestations, it seems you can't take the stage out of the comic. Carey launches into an impromptu mini-routine.

He reminds his fellow comic that he was there first: "I have it all. They're going for the grail. But, they can't catch the grail man. It's mine."

In many ways, that's true. Few comics will reach the level of Carrey's stardom. But, it wasn't an easy road. The show depicts stand up as combat sport. As the circle of characters will learn, there is nothing more vulnerable than an open mike, a hostile audience and a predilection for self-sabotage. And it makes for intriguing, heartfelt drama as you root for some incredibly damaged human beings.

Although partly autobiographical, Carrey says he created the show to also pay tribute to the comedy greats that inspired him.

"I just wanted to pay homage to these places you know, like this club we're in, to the era and to that phenomenon. You know the '70s coming out of Vietnam, and coming out of all of that energy, just like these people just bursting out and like expressing themselves like no one has ever before," says Carrey. "It was a time when you're getting a little help from the godfathers like Lenny Bruce and Richard Pryor. I remember being in a parking lot as a 19-year-old comic and they're saying here's what you're doing wrong. Here's what you're doing right. That meant the universe to me."

Many of Carrey's experiences — not all good — have made it into the arc of the show. All his history demands a meaty autobiography. But, he'll settle for an edgy cable series. The series airs on Crave TV in Canada in June.

"I'm hoping that people will get transported back to a place that was magic man and they'll fall in love with these people," says Carrey. "Wonderfully flawed, creative, desperate people who just like them, want to be super heroes and I think it was never more evident than in a comedy club, they are part of a circus. And it's altruism as well, because comics want to love people and be loved back, that's the purest thing you can do for an audience, is to free them from their concerns."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

BEHIND THE SCENES

Inside the end of Obama's White House

Less than 48 hours before President Barack Obama leaves office, CNN will air an intimate tribute told through the workdays and accounts of key White House staff members.

But however worthy it may be, this two-hour documentary, airing Wednesday at 9 p.m. EST, may face a wary reception.

For those who have disagreed with Obama's policies and even questioned his citizenship the past eight years, this film is unlikely at such a late date to stir a reappraisal of his legacy or character.

Meanwhile, for others, the film will be yet another painful reminder of what will soon be over and what might have been.

Presumably without meaning to plumb the depths of despair gripping Obama's supporters, the program strikes an elegiac chord with its title: The End: Inside the Last Days of the Obama White House.

Spanning the past two months, The End ends, fittingly, with Obama's farewell address last week in Chicago.

It begins on election day, as Hillary Clinton's electoral-college defeat by Donald Trump is received at the White House with shock and grief.

But then we see Obama bucking up his thunderstruck staff.

"Everybody is sad when their side loses an election," he says. "But we all have to remember we're all on one team."

Chief speechwriter Cody Keenan crafted the president's magnanimous remarks. In his windowless office in the White House basement, he concedes those words are "obviously not the ones I wanted to be writing."

Barack Obama and press secretary Josh Earnest count down their days in the White House. MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

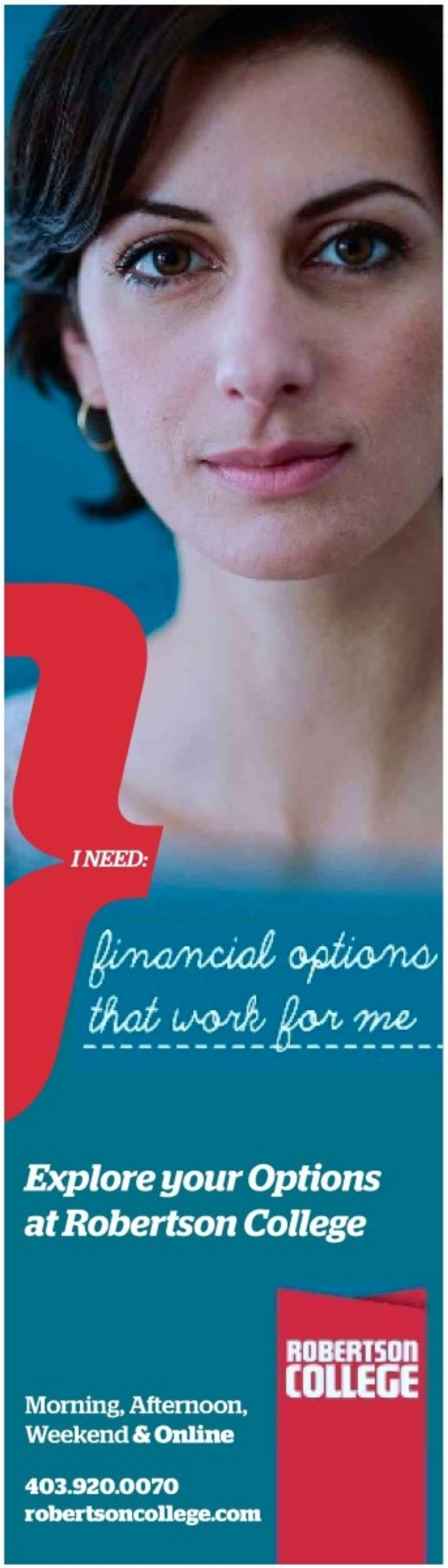
Another recurring character, press secretary Josh Earnest, gathers his crew to prep for a news conference as they scramble for grounding in the flood of events.

"Just don't look at Twitter," cracks one of his fellow writers and they all laugh.

Nothing in particular is cited from the tweets Trump has made part of his routine.

"That's a good rule for life," Earnest replies instead.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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All the right proportions

REVIEW

Solid looks, solid ride, but where's the AWD?

Jodi Lai
AutoGuide.com

Tiny crossovers are the hottest thing in cars right now, and any automaker that doesn't have one is really behind the times.

Instead of putting a huge amount of dollars into making its own small crossover, Infiniti is piggybacking on a Mercedes platform and has come up with the QX30.

The tester here is the 2017 Infiniti QX30 Sport model, which is the topline model that comes packed with performance upgrades and almost all the features drivers want. More on that later.

I prefer the look of the Infiniti model over the GLA it's based on. The QX30 is much more stylish, a lot less generic, and it definitely looks more modern. The GLA has a beefier, boxier and more muscular look, but I like the swoopy lines of the Infiniti better.

The problem with that pretty design is that practicality takes a hit in terms of cargo capacity, room for rear passengers and sightlines.

Although the seven-speed dual clutch transmission gets confused sometimes at lower speeds and can shift abruptly now and then, it's not a deal breaker.

The QX30 is powered by a 2.0-litre turbocharged four-cylinder engine that outputs 208 horsepower and 258 pound-feet of torque. That's plenty to get the crossover moving, but the engine isn't the smoothest at low speeds and it displays some turbo lag. At highway speeds, however, the engine exhibits Ryan Gosling smoothness. Very little noise and vibration make it into the cabin during highway drives.

This Sport model gets no power upgrades over the regular QX30, but it does get better brakes and a suspension that's tuned for better handling. That sportier suspension definitely makes the ride in the city more choppy, but it does mean that it's better in the corners.

The weird thing is that this top of the line QX30 Sport isn't available with all-wheel drive, which seems like a missed opportunity. Buyers have to level down to get it. This was likely a move to keep the price in check, especially because this Sport model has so many other features, I can imagine it getting pretty expensive if it had all-wheel-drive.

THE CHECKLIST | 2017 INFINITI QX30 SPORT

THE BASICS

Engine: 2.0L turbo 4-cylinder
Output: 208 hp, 258 lb-ft of torque
Transmission: Seven-speed dual-clutch auto
Fuel Economy (L/100 km): 9.7 city, 7.1 hwy
Price: Sport model starts at $46,490

LOVE IT

- Great driving dynamics
- Stylish look
- Smooth highway driving

LEAVE IT

- Can get pricey
- Lack of AWD on topline model
- Poor sightlines

Toyota creates 'kinetic warmth'

ASTON MARTIN

Insane hypercar heads to Canada

For the first time since its debut, the radical AM-RB 001 will venture out from Aston Martin's headquarters in Gaydon, England, to make its North American debut in Toronto on Feb. 16, 2017. Its jump over the Atlantic puddle for the Canadian International Auto Show will be the hypercar's first appearance in front of the anoraks on the global auto show stage.

MICHAEL ACCARDI/AUTOGUIDE.COM

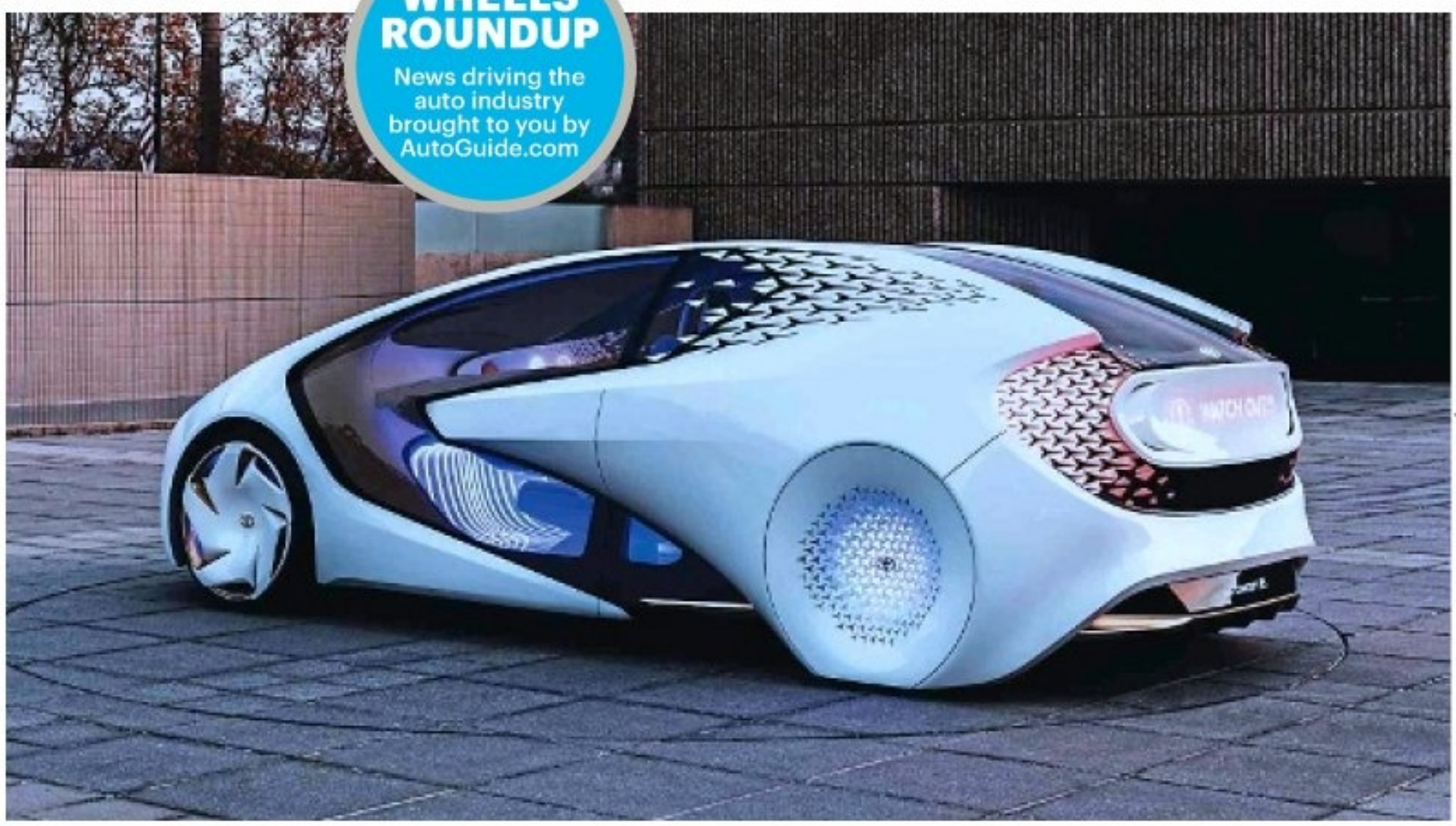
WHEELS ROUNDUP
News driving the auto industry brought to you by AutoGuide.com

SKYJET

Lexus by land sea and air

Lexus is covering all three modes of transportation: land, sea and air. After unveiling a luxurious yacht concept featuring a pair of 5.0-litre V8 engines, the Japanese automaker unveiled a replica of a key pursuit craft in the 2017 film Valerian and the City of a Thousand Planets. The single-seater Skyjet premiered as part of an Lexus event in Miami that also showcased the brand's latest products.

JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM



CONCEPT-I

Toyota concept aims for emotional bond

Toyota recently rolled out the Concept-i, a car that looks like something Apple would have designed. But unlike other high-tech vehicle concepts, Toyota's latest isn't a fully autonomous vehicle. In fact, the concept demonstrates the automaker's view that vehicles of the future should start with the people who use them. With that in mind, Toyota equipped the Concept-i with a powerful AI that is capable of learning with the driver, building a relationship that is both meaningful and human. The AI Agent is nicknamed "Yui" and is designed to communicate across cultures to a global audience. According to the Japanese automaker, it was created around the philosophy of "kinetic warmth," a belief that mobility technology should be warm, welcoming and fun. The AI takes advantage of advanced automated vehicle technologies to help improve driving safety, combined with visual and haptic stimuli to augment communication-based on driver responsiveness. Users can choose between automated or manual driving based on their personal preference and the concept will monitor driver attention and road conditions, increasing automated support when necessary. JASON SIU/AUTOGUIDE.COM

TECHNOLOGY

BMW 'sculpture' thinks holograms are the future

BMW is focusing on technology that will work in conjunction with self-driving cars, such as a system that will offer information on passing buildings. The driver must simply point at the building, and thanks to gesture control, the car will bring up the requested info. That is also the reason the BMW i Inside Future sculpture was recently brought to CES 2017. It starts with the Holo-Active Touch system, which is a new kind of user interface that has a free-floating virtual display that users control with their hands, though no physical contact is ever made with the car. Haptic feedback is even offered thanks to ultrasonic sound.

STEPHEN ELMER/AUTOGUIDE.COM

IN BRIEF

Toyota building a hot hatch with over 200 horsepower

A legitimate contender to today's crop of great hot hatches like the Ford Fiesta ST is coming from an unlikely automaker: Toyota. Toyota has revealed its new Yaris hot hatch, packing three doors and more than 210 horsepower. The brand is also getting set to reveal its new Yaris WRC rally car, which serves as the inspiration for this new road-going hot Yaris. Toyota will reveal the new hot Yaris at the Geneva Motor Show in March alongside the redesigned standard variant of the Yaris which has a new front fascia, a revised rear end and a fresh interior. Toyota also says that the Yaris will offer a more comfortable ride and better handling. The Yaris Hybrid is being updated and made stronger, though new details were released. STEPHEN ELMER/AUTOGUIDE.COM

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NHL FLAMES BURN PAST THE PANTHERS
Florida Panthers goalie Roberto Luongo swats away the puck as teammate Jakub Kindl, right, checks Calgary Flames forward Troy Brouwer during first period in Calgary on Tuesday. Calgary ran out easy 5-2 winners and the victory snapped the Flames' two-game losing streak. Next up, they will host the Nashville Predators on Thursday night.
JEFF MCINTOSH/THE CANADIAN PRESS

HOCKEY IN BRIEF

Sakic, Koivu and Selanne to enter International HOF
Joe Sakic as well as Finnish stars Saku Koivu and Teemu Selanne are among five former players named Tuesday for induction into the International Ice Hockey Federation Hall of Fame.

The IIHF also announced Tuesday that German defenceman Uwe Krupp and U.S. women's star Angela Ruggiero would enter the hall along with builder Dieter Kalt of Austria. The induction ceremony is on May 21 in Germany. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Struggling Islanders show coach Capuano the door
Stuck in last place in the Eastern Conference, the New York Islanders fired coach Jack Capuano on Tuesday, ending one of the longest tenures in the NHL.

General manager Garth Snow named assistant GM/coach Doug Weight as Capuano's interim replacement. The Islanders are 17-17-8 and their 42 points are the fewest in the East, leading to Snow making the move.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stars edge Rangers in thriller
Patrick Sharp scored twice, Jamie Benn and Patrick Eaves had a goal and two assists each and the Dallas Stars held on for a wild 7-6 victory over the Rangers on Tuesday night in New York.

Cody Eakin had a goal and an assist, Antoine Roussel and Adam Cracknell also scored and the Stars won for the third time in nine games (3-5-1). Radek Faksa and Lauri Korpikoski each had two assists.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jackets blow away Canes
Brandon Dubinsky ended a 17-game scoring drought with two goals, Boone Jenner had a goal and an assist and the Blue Jackets beat the Carolina Hurricanes 4-1 on Tuesday night in Columbus.

Lukas Sedlak also scored for Columbus, and Ryan Murray and Cam Atkinson had a pair of assists each.

All-star Sergei Bobrovsky returned after missing the past three games because of illness and made 24 saves. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Jose set to stay a Jay

MLB

Toronto not keen on losing another star after Edwin exit

Jose Bautista GETTY IMAGES

The Toronto Blue Jays already lost one of their faces of the franchise this off-season. The team has made sure that Jose Bautista will not follow Edwin Encarnacion's lead.

A person with knowledge of the negotiations tells The Associated Press that the free agent outfielder is staying with the Toronto Blue Jays after agreeing to an $18-million US, one-year contract with mutual options for more years.

The person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the team had not announced the deal, said Bautista passed his physical and the contract was finalized Tuesday night.

Neither the team nor Bautista's agent Jay Alou would comment on the reports. Some of Bautista's teammates didn't wait for a formal announcement to celebrate his return. "Put them hands up! JoeyBats is back!!! JoeyBats19," second baseman Devon Travis tweeted on Tuesday afternoon.

"Told y'all. Lol JoeyBats19," tweeted right-hander Marcus Stroman. Bautista, a six-time all-star, hit 22 homers and had 69 RBIs last year but injuries limited him to just 116 games. He signed a $65-million, five-year deal in 2011 and the Blue Jays picked up a $14-million team option last season.

Bautista rejected the team's $17.2-million qualifying offer last fall but in the end, it appears both sides have circled back in what could be a good deal for all involved.

$60M
Amount that Bautista's deal could rise to over 3 years as their are two mutual option years.

The veteran outfielder's return would certainly help ease the pain of losing one of the game's top hitters in Encarnacion. The Blue Jays were interested in re-signing Encarnacion, but he chose to sign with the Cleveland Indians.

A return to the Jays will also allow Bautista to show that he's still one of the sport's top players. The Jays will fill a need in the outfield, bring back a core offence player and potentially reap the benefits of a slugger who is motivated to perform.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

NBA

DeRozan nets 36 points as Raps down Brooklyn

DeMar DeRozan had 36 points and 11 rebounds, Cory Joseph scored a career-high 33 and the Toronto Raptors beat the free-falling Brooklyn Nets 119-109 on Tuesday night.

Toronto won its fourth straight game and extended Brooklyn's losing streak to 11 in a row. The Nets have not won since Dec. 26. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chris Paul out of Clippers lineup with thumb injury

Chris Paul will undergo surgery on Wednesday to repair a torn ligament in his left thumb and is expected to miss six to eight weeks.

The Clippers said Tuesday that their all-star guard will continue to undergo treatment and evaluation by the club's medical staff.

Paul was injured on a first-half play involving Oklahoma City's Russell Westbrook in Monday night's victory over the Thunder. Paul didn't return in the second half.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Standing tall at Oak Hill

BASKETBALL

Nova Scotia's Wigginton making a name on grand stage

Several decades of basketball greatness can be found at the end of a two-lane, unlit highway that winds unforgivingly through the Blue Ridge Mountains in southern Virginia.

Past the Christmas tree farms, grazing cows and Baptist churches — long after cellphone service has disappeared — you'll find Oak Hill Academy and its storied Turner Gymnasium.

Modest in size but draped in history, the 400-seat gym is where the likes of Kevin Durant, Carmelo Anthony and Jerry Stackhouse once famously dominated their opponents as gifted kids.

It's also the place Nova Scotia teenager Lindell Wigginton has chosen as his launching pad with the goal of becoming the first Maritimer to play in the NBA.

"When I got here, I was kind of shocked. I thought it was going to be a big arena, because Oak Hill is such a big name," Wigginton said. "But I knew it was a powerhouse program and I just wanted to come in, and be the best player I could be."

The six-foot-two guard from Dartmouth is the first Canadian to play for tiny Oak Hill, a Baptist-affiliated co-ed boarding school of some 100 students. Fifty of those kids play on one of the basketball teams.

$35K

A year at Oak Hill costs about $35,000 US, but Wigginton is on a scholarship that covers most of that.

He was the team's top scorer last season, leading the Warriors to a 45-1 record, and a U.S. national high school title. In the championship game at Madison Square Garden, Wigginton converted a three-point play with 29 seconds left in overtime en route to a 62-60 victory over Indiana's La Lumiere.

"He's probably our best player right now," said Oak Hill's legendary head coach Steve Smith. "Lindell is a fierce competitor, you can see how he plays. He's aggressive. He doesn't mind getting hit, when he goes to the basket he wants to get hit, he wants to go to the foul line, he wants three-point plays. But he can shoot from the perimeter too, he shoots pullups, he's got the whole game."

Wigginton, 18, manages to maintain top grades in his classes despite a tough travel schedule. They'll play more than 40 games this season, travelling as far as Hawaii and California.

On Monday, the Warriors were in Springfield, Mass., playing in the Spalding HoopHall Classic at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. They dropped an 80-77 decision to Seattle's Nathan Hale High School, just their third loss this season. ESPNU broadcast the game.

"(Wigginton) is playing big-time basketball," Smith said. "At the high school level, you can't get any bigger than this."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lindell Wigginton of Dartmouth, N.S., represented Team USA at Adidas Eurocamp last June in Treviso, Italy.

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NFL

Regretful Tomlin angry over Brown's video post

The father in Mike Tomlin regrets the language he used to describe the New England Patriots during the postgame speech Pittsburgh Steelers wide receiver Antonio Brown opted to livestream on social media after a taut playoff victory over Kansas City.

The coach in Tomlin has just as big an issue with one of his team's biggest stars forcing the Steelers to talk about something other than trying to find a way to finally beat Tom Brady when it counts.

Mike Tomlin, left, and Antonio Brown GETTY IMAGES

A characteristically blunt Tomlin called Brown's decision to broadcast to the world more than 17 minutes of Pittsburgh's giddy locker room celebration — a move that caught Tomlin using a handful of profanities — "foolish," "selfish" and "inconsiderate."

"Not only is it a violation of our policy, it's a violation of league policy, both of which he knows," Tomlin said Tuesday.

"So there are consequences to be dealt with from his perspective. We will punish him. We won't punish us."

Tomlin took responsibility for his choice of words, though he was unaware of being filmed as he spoke. During Tomlin's post-game remarks, he attached an expletive to the Patriots, who earned a full day's head start on preparing for the Steelers by virtue of beating Houston on Saturday night, 24 hours before Pittsburgh outlasted Kansas City 18-16.

"The responsibility associated with being in this thing, just from a role model standpoint, it's something that I personally embrace," Tomlin said.

"It's something that we as a team and organization embrace. So that's why the language, specifically, in terms of the content, is regrettable."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAKE IT TONIGHT

Sticky Garlic Chicken

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

Adults will love the flavourful mix of hoisin sauce (a Chinese bbq sauce), ginger and garlic but it's the honey's sticky deliciousness that will hook the littlest diners.

Ready in 30 minutes
Prep time: 15 minutes
Cook time: 15 miutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch chunks
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup panko

For the sauce:
- 1/4 cup reduced sodium soy sauce
- 1/4 cup honey
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 Tbsp hoisin sauce
- 1 Tbsp freshly grated ginger
- 1 Tbsp rice wine vinegar
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp sesame seeds

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Lightly oil or spray a 9×13 baking dish.

2. Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. Working in batches, dip into egg, dredge in panko, pressing to coat. Place in baking dish. Bake until golden brown and crisp, about 15-20 minutes.

3. In a medium saucepan over medium heat, combine soy sauce, honey, garlic, hoisin sauce, ginger and vinegar until slightly thickened, about 2-3 minutes. Stir in chicken and gently toss to coat all chicken bites.

4. Serve immediately garnished with green onions and sesame seeds.

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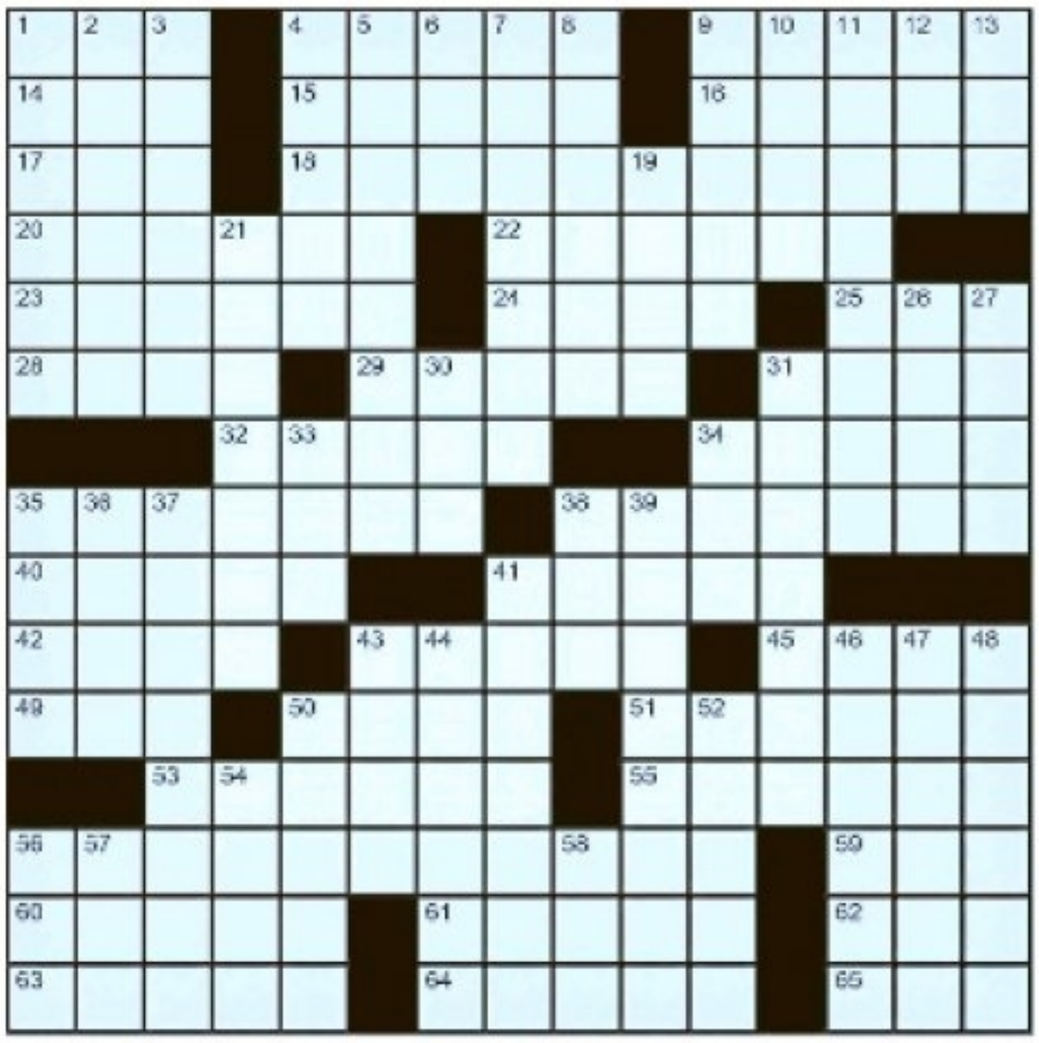
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. High-arc shot on the court
4. Nursemaids
9. Carry on with mischief: 2 wds.
14. 'Impress' suffix
15. Historic Russian ruler
16. Thor = __ god of thunder
17. Ant & __ ("Britain's Got Talent" hosts)
18. Plane's undercarriage: 2 wds.
20. Visit a friend for coffee: 2 wds.
22. Disinclined
23. Sir __ Hillary (Everest mountaineer)
24. Eugene of "Best in Show" (2000)
25. Howe'er
28. Achiever
29. Bird of Jove
31. In-a-bowl hot serving
32. __-loading (Athlete's strategy)
34. 'Right' or 'Blue' in the ocean
35. Vivid
38. Dolores O'__ (Cranberries songstress)
40. Certain Celts
41. Prefix to 'dyne' (Toothpaste brand)
42. Stretched out circle
43. Speeds for horses
45. Provo's place
49. Sales pro
50. Like part of a triathlon
51. Ingredient in table salt, Potassium __
53. Not out/Instead in one's domain: 2 wds.
55. One experiencing astonishment
56. Newfoundland community near Gros Morne National Park: 2 wds.
59. Not new
60. Austrian pianist Mr. Schnabel
61. Loosen the laces
62. Mildly-disgusted interjection!
63. Popular tunesmith, Carole __ Sager
64. Type of car
65. Nourished

DOWN
1. Covered, as a tub of margarine
2. Train too hard
3. Get
4. __-__-one
5. Wanders
6. Ms. Jillian
7. 2004 Viggo Mortensen horse flick
8. Whine
9. Steamed
10. Sprockets
11. Arboreal amphibian: 2 wds.
12. Letters on a Bruce Springsteen album
13. Apiece
19. Canadian name from "Scream" (1996)
21. __ Mountains (Range in British Columbia)
26. __-hoop
27. Candid
30. Mr. Vigoda
31. Covers
33. Li'l response
34. Canadian writer Mr. Mitchell, et al. (b.1914 - d.1998)
35. Dr. Frankenstein's helper
36. Place for church pews
37. Canadian band which presumably might enjoy cucumber sandwiches: 2 wds.
38. Soak flax
39. Badge
41. "__ Like You" by Adele
43. Deuces
44. Commotion
46. Lead given by the insider
47. Antarctica penguin
48. Did a Border Collie's job
50. Bake, as eggs
52. Like the main ingredients in granola
54. Unfeigned
56. Apprehend
57. British singer Rita
58. "__ be my pleasure."

✷ IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

♈ **Aries** March 21 - April 20
Use all your powers of diplomacy and patience to deal with others today and avoid disputes and arguments. Admittedly, something unexpected will catch you off guard.

♉ **Taurus** April 21 - May 21
This is a classic day for equipment breakdowns or computer crashes at work. Be patient, because this will no doubt be frustrating. Use your Taurus diplomacy.

♊ **Gemini** May 22 - June 21
Parents should be vigilant today, because this is an accident-prone day for your kids. Know where they are at all times. Be extra aware of potential hazards.

♋ **Cancer** June 22 - July 23
Family squabbles might erupt today because something unexpected happens. Small appliances might break down or minor breakages could occur. Have patience!

♌ **Leo** July 24 - Aug. 23
Pay attention to everything you say and do today, because this is an accidentprone day. Make an effort to avoid arguments with others. Your own mental or emotional distraction is the reason an accident might occur.

♍ **Virgo** Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Something unexpected will affect your cash or possessions today. This could create a problem with a romantic partner or one of your kids.

♎ **Libra** Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
It's easy to get into arguments with others today, because someone might do something out of the blue. Don't get your belly in a rash. Stay chill.

♏ **Scorpio** Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Avoid power struggles with others today, because they might arise. This could be because something goes haywire at work. Patience is your best ally.

♐ **Sagittarius** Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Financial disputes with a female acquaintance might ruin your day today. Tread carefully. Don't start anything that you can't finish. (Maybe it's best not to start anything!)

♑ **Capricorn** Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Arguments with bosses and parents are likely today. Because sudden detours and surprises catch people off guard, they are easily upset. This is a tough day for a lot of people.

♒ **Aquarius** Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
This is an accident-prone day for you, so slow down and take it easy. Don't push the river. People feel impatient and sidetracked by the unexpected today. Stay mellow.

♓ **Pisces**
Feb. 20 - March 20
Squabbles about shared property and shared expenses might arise today. Ideally, try to postpone these discussions for another day.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

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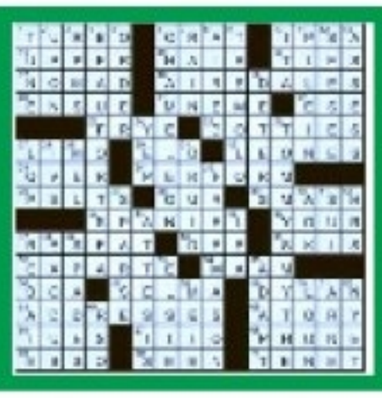

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Calgary's new communities growing fast

POPULATION INCREASE

From mid-2015 to mid-2016 the city as a whole added 4,256 residents

Miles Durrie

Calgary's newest communities are growing fast, while many long-established neighbourhoods are staying even or showing slight declines in population.

The City of Calgary Planning and Development department's Community Population numbers, gleaned from the civic census, reveal that from mid-2015 to mid-2016 the city as a whole added 4,256 residents. That's a 0.3-per-cent increase, for a total of 1,235,171 Calgarians.

In percentage terms, the fastest-growing residential community was Cityscape, the three-year-old Mattamy Homes community in the northeast, with a population that more than doubled from 627 to 1,551 — a jump of 147 per cent.

Also more than doubling was northwest community Nolan Hill, by United Communities, where the population leapt from 1,723 to 3,756, growth of 118 per cent.

In terms of sheer numbers, though, the southeast's Mahogany polished off the rest of the field. The Hopewell Residential community added 2,040 people, increasing its population by 41 per cent from 4,960 to 7,000.

At the quadrant level, Mahogany — along with Auburn Bay by Brookfield Residential, Westcreek Developments' Legacy and Hopewell's Copperfield, which each also boasted four-digit population growth — helped give the southeast top spot in the numbers game, with growth of 1.6 per cent, or 5,254 people.

Also showing significant growth in the southeast were New Brighton, Cranston, Walden, the East Village and Seton — all under development (or redevelopment, in the case of East Village) in the last decade.

These growing communities were more than enough to counterbalance the small decrease in residents in more than 25 older built-out southeast neighbourhoods. Forest Lawn, McKenzie Lake, Acadia, Erin Woods, Penbrooke Meadows, Deer Ridge, Riverbend and Sundance were among those in the quadrant that saw small declines of a few dozen to a few hundred residents.

Meanwhile, the northwest quadrant also showed growth in resident numbers, adding 3,225 residents for an increase of one per cent.

Joining fast-growing Nolan Hill, adding to the northwest's population, were Evanston by Qualico Communities, Sage Hill by United Communities and Sherwood by Melcor Developments, each with growth of more than 10 per cent.

Meanwhile, tiny percentage declines were seen in several established northwest areas including Edgemont, Panorama Hills, Dalhousie, Bowness and Rosedale.

In the northeast and southwest quadrants, while several newer communities grew significantly, population as a whole dropped slightly between 2015 and 2016. The northeast lost 1,843 people, for a 0.7 per cent drop, while 2,380 fewer people called the southwest home, for a decline of 0.8 per cent.

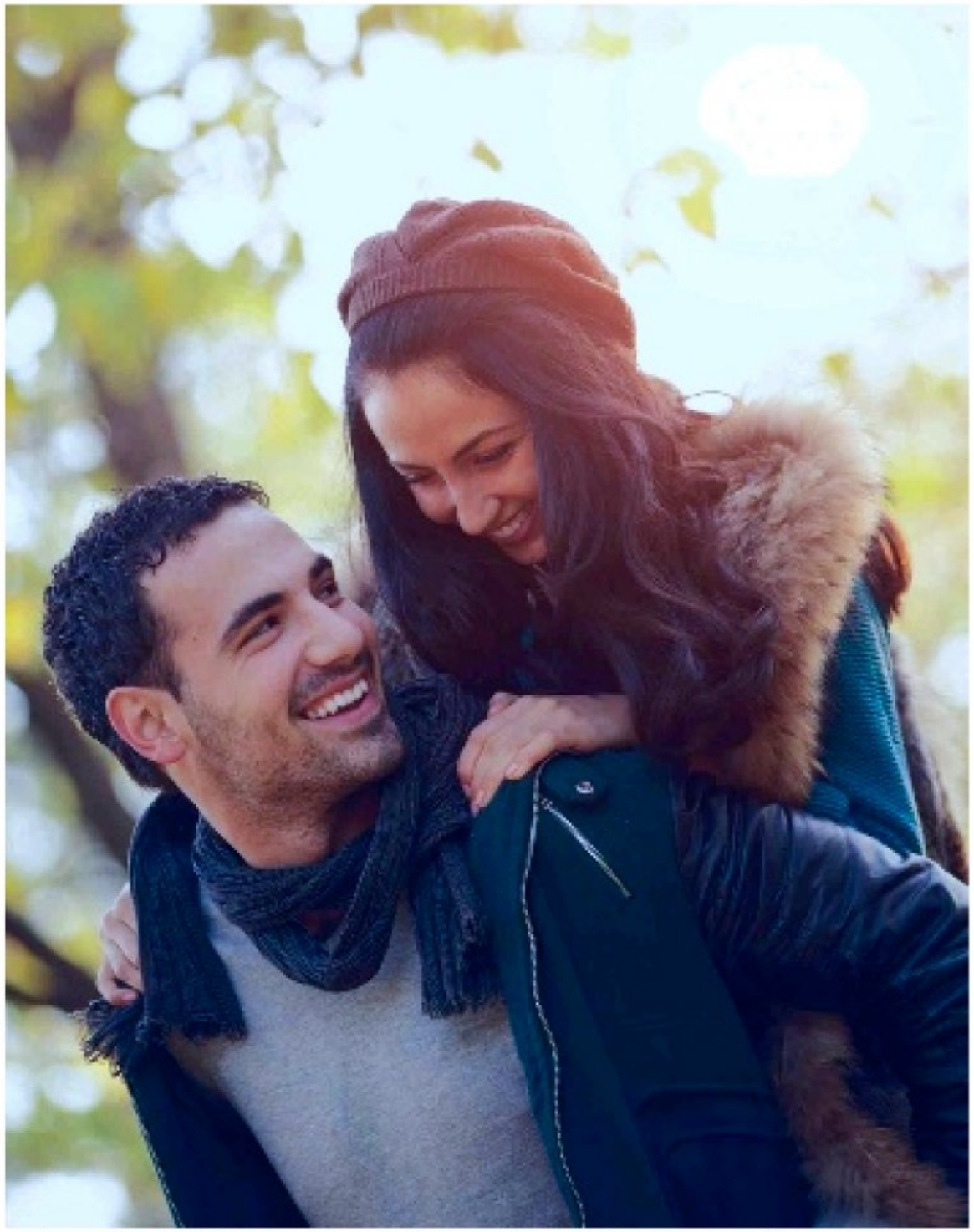
> **"It's possible — even probable — that at least some of these changes reflect people moving from older communities to new ones.**
> Patrick Saunders, planner with the City of Calgary's Growth Strategies team

Showing strong growth in the southwest were Aspen Woods, West Springs and Currie Barracks, while Skyview Ranch, Redstone and Saddle Ridge, along with Cityscape, drew the highest numbers of new residents to the northeast.

The numbers might lead one to conclude that a significant number of people are moving from the northeast and southwest to new communities in the other two quadrants, but that can't be proven, says Patrick Saunders, planner with the City of Calgary's Growth Strategies team.

"It's possible — even probable — that at least some of these changes reflect people moving from older communities to new ones," Saunders says.

"But in reality we don't know if the growth was from inter-quadrant migration, in-migration to Calgary, or natural increase."



At the quadrant level, the southeast took top spot in the numbers game, with growth of 1.6 per cent, or 5,254 people. ISTOCK

Finding a home with a brighter future

BUYER PROFILE

Natural light and a vibrant colour scheme in Cranston

Miles Durrie

Jodi Dirk gave up her dated home for an apartment-style condo in Cardel Lifestyles' Cranston Ridge. CONTRIBUTED

> **Being so close to the pathways and river valley is a huge selling feature for these condos...**
> Condo dweller Jodi Dirk

For Jodi Dirk, buying an apartment-style condo in Cardel Lifestyles' Cranston Ridge has turned out to be a really bright idea.

Dirk, who works in sales for another Calgary home builder, was already living in the southeast community of Cranston just a few blocks away from the multifamily development, but her home was feeling a bit dated.

"Everything was dark in there," she says — even the furnishings, which she had chosen at a time when a darker look was in style. "But I got tired of it. I wanted something brighter, so I found this place."

She saw right away that the main-floor unit had a lot going for it, not the least of which was its location.

"Cranston is great for me," says the Lethbridge native, who moved to Calgary in 1984 and has always lived in the city's southern communities. "I'm definitely a south girl — I love the south part of the city."

Dirk's other priorities included plenty of natural light and a bright colour scheme, along with a location that made it easy for her and her Yorkshire terrier, Pippi, to get out into nature.

"Being so close to the pathways and river valley is a huge selling feature for these condos for people who like to be active."

She also wanted a place that was ready for immediate possession. The condo fulfilled just about everything on her wish list, so she moved in last September.

Dirk says her two adult daughters at first warned her she might have trouble downsizing from her previous 1,400-sq.-ft. place to the condo's 974 sq. ft., but there were no issues — "in fact, I absolutely love it," she says. "There's a large storage unit in the basement, and you choose smaller furniture and purge things out of your life that you don't really need."

The apartment's floor plan is thoughtfully designed to create both openness and separated spaces. The u-shaped kitchen with its expanse of white quartz countertop and stainless steel appliances looks out onto a dining area that flows into an inviting sunlit living room.

Flooring transitions from wood to ceramic tile and carpet as one moves from the main area through the two master-sized bedrooms, two bathrooms and laundry room. Dirk loves the high kitchen cupboards, the pantry and pot drawers. "And I like my large deck and the underground heated parking — plus, I don't ever have to shovel snow or mow lawns."

Helping to seal the deal was Cardel Lifestyles sales associate Judy-Lynn Lavelle. "I can't say enough about her," Dirk says. "She was so good, so patient. Because I'm in new home sales I kind of look for that — especially the honesty part of it — and she's fantastic." The follow-up service from Cardel also does not disappoint, she adds.

Dirk is loving the easy access from Cranston to Stoney Trail, Deerfoot Trail and Hwy. 2, and looking forward to the further development and maturing of her corner of southeast Calgary. Future plans call for amenities in adjacent communities that will include movie theatres and more recreation facilities. Nearby shopping is already plentiful.

"We have a great community centre here, great pathways, the South Health Campus is close by, and I work in the south, so the area is perfect for me."

Calgary Olympian's resort wins global award

LUXURY TRAVEL

Resort was named Luxury Resort of the Year – Mexico

Kathy McCormick

A Calgary Olympian has reached the pinnacle yet again — but this time it's in the real estate world.

Vivo Resorts Oceanfront Properties, being developed by the recreational property team led by Cary Mullen, two-time Olympian and World Cup champion downhill skier, was named Luxury Resort of the Year – Mexico, from U.K.-based Luxury Travel Guide.

Vivo Resorts is an oceanfront gated community of luxury condominiums and private homes on 30.35 hectares of land on the southern tip of Emerald Coast, just 16 kilometres from Puerto Escondido, Mexico. The land includes 0.07 hectares of frontage on Palmarito Beach.

"The timing is impeccable," says Mullen, president and founder of Vivo Resorts. "It's great to be recognized by industry experts as we launch the remaining phase. This is a testament to our vision to create a luxury resort neighbouring on one of Mexico's most authentic and emerging destinations."

Started in 2009, the master-planned community is now in its final stage of development and, by completion, it will have 114 home sites, up to 400 condominiums and a wealth of amenities, including a US$7 million clubhouse scheduled to open in 2017.

With more than 53,000 square feet spread out over four floors, the clubhouse features a spa, ocean-view fitness facility, lounge, sports bar, Kids Club, tennis courts, and conference and event space. It is adjacent to the courtyard and swimming pools.

The resort was chosen by Luxury Travel Guide after its team of experts scoured the globe to identify the best companies, celebrating excellence across all sectors of the affluent travel and tourism industry.

Since competing in downhill skiing globally, Mullen has become a best-selling author, applying his five Winning Secrets to real estate development. He is also a motivational speaker.

For more information, check vivoresorts.com.

> **This is a testament to our vision to create a luxury resort neighbouring on one of Mexico's most authentic and emerging destinations.**
>
> Cary Mullen, president and founder of Vivo Resorts

The property team behind the resort is led by Cary Mullen, two-time Olympian and World Cup champion downhill skier. CONTRIBUTED

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Baker
3C HERITAGE DRIVE

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$309,900

- 3 Bedrooms, 2.5 Bathrooms
- Includes Back Deck, Backyard Landscaping & Fence
- No Maintenance Front Yard Landscaping
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- Open Concept Main Floor
- Granite Countertops in Kitchen
- Stainless Steel Appliance Package
- Hardwood & Tile Flooring

CONTACT: 403-981-2135 or heritagehills@stepperhomes.com

IMMEDIATE POSSESSION

Heritage Hills, Cochrane

Andover
3B HERITAGE VISTA

1405 sq. ft. Townhome

$314,900

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- Includes Back Deck, Backyard Landscaping and Fence
- No Maintenance Front Yard Landscaping
- Single Front Attached Garage
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- 2nd Floor Loft
- Quartz Countertops in Kitchen, Main Bath & Ensuite
- Stainless Steel Appliance Package
- Luxury Vinyl Plank & Tile Flooring

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IMMEDIATE POSSESSION

Heritage Hills, Cochrane

Viewpoint
20 HERITAGE BLVD

1640 sq. ft. Laned

$399,900

- 3 Bedrooms, 2.5 Bathrooms
- Includes Back Deck
- Large Front Porch
- Spacious Master Suite with Ensuite & Walk-in Closet
- 2nd Floor Laundry Room
- Main Floor Box Office
- Stainless Steel Appliance Package
- Granite Countertops in Kitchen, Main Bath & Ensuite
- Hardwood & Tile Flooring

CONTACT: 403-981-2135 or heritagehills@stepperhomes.com

IMMEDIATE POSSESSION

Legacy, SE Calgary

Bowen
48 LEGACY LANDING SE

2335 sq. ft. Front Garage

$539,900

- 3 Bedrooms, 2.5 Bathrooms
- Main Floor Den
- 2nd Floor Laundry Room
- Spacious Master Suite with 5 pc Ensuite & Walk-in Closet
- Stainless Steel Appliance Package
- Quartz Countertops in Kitchen, Main Bath & Ensuite
- Hardwood & Tile Flooring

CONTACT: 587-350-5743 or legacy@stepperhomes.com

IMMEDIATE POSSESSION

Kinniburgh, Chestermere

Galveston
167 KINNIBURGH LANE

2310 sq. ft. Front Garage

$579,900

- 3 Bedrooms, 2.5 Bathrooms
- Includes Back Deck
- Sunshine Basement
- 2nd Floor Laundry Room
- Main Floor Den
- Stainless Steel Appliance Package
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PRICED RIGHT

Four affordable home options to consider

Karen Durrie

Whether you're a first-time buyer or a downsizer, you're likely to be looking for an affordably priced home that hits all the right notes.

With Calgary's average home price pegged at about $453,000, according to the Calgary Real Estate Board's Dec. 5 statistics, you'll need to do a little legwork to nail down a home under $400,000, but it can be done — especially with many builders offering more diverse products in new communities, including townhomes, duplexes and apartment-style condos with spacious plans similar to single-family homes. You'll also find lower-priced single-family homes if you forego a garage, or if you cast your eyes a bit further out, in new developments outside the city, such as in Airdrie or Chestermere.

Here's where you'll find a few gems under $400,000 worth considering.

The Zen Cranston development features two-storey townhomes as well as bungalow garden homes priced from the $260,000s. CONTRIBUTED

Zen Cranston Solar

The 66-townhome development by Avalon in Cranston's Riverstone neighbourhood features a colourful array of two-level attached houses with two solar panels, and an opportunity to opt into up to eight — to help offset utility bills. Two-level townhomes range from 1132 to 1413 sq. ft., with six floor plans available, all featuring two bedrooms and a varying number of bathrooms. Zen Cranston also has bungalow garden homes in two floor plans. Homes are priced from the $260,000s.

Urban townhomes in Cityscape

Mattamy Homes has some nicely valued urban townhomes in a variety of exterior architectural styles, from Craftsman to Prairie, starting in the high $200,000s to the mid-high $300,000s. For example the 1,412-sq.-ft. Vibe Corner development is priced from $315,900 for three bedrooms and 2.5 baths, with architect's choice upgrades swapping out a fourth bedroom in lieu of a home office, or an extra "owner's retreat" in lieu of one of the second-floor bedrooms.

Laned Homes in Ravenswood

Broadview has a number of garageless single-family homes in the southeast Airdie community of Ravenswood for a hair under $400,000. The Mackenzie Craftsman model is a 1,497-sq.-ft. two storey with three bedrooms, 2.5 baths, and nine-foot ceilings. Pacesetter also offers laned homes in Ravenswood from the $350,000s, including the three-bedroom, 2.5 bath Shelby 3 model at $359,900 including house, lot and GST.

Duplexes in Carrington

Excel has several good-sized duplexes on Genstar's northwest Carrington community that are perfect for first-time owners and young families. Some models have front-drive garages, bright rooms, and second-floor laundry rooms from the mid to high $300,000s, ranging up to 1,650 sq. ft., with chef's kitchens and deluxe ensuites.

The area features natural wetlands, a future LRT station, and quick access to Stoney Trail. Centre Street pre-construction home sales recently launched at the Carrington sales centre with show homes open daily.

Building the foundation of Stepper Homes

BUILDER PROFILE

Chairman talks about his father's legacy and the current day

Kathy McCormick

Harry Stepper, current chairman of Stepper Homes, says the company is truly a family business. CONTRIBUTED

For the iconic movie hero Forest Gump, life was like a box of chocolates because you never knew what you were going to get. For Rudy Stepper, it was more like a painting, because you never knew what it was going to look like until the thousands of little brush strokes were put together.

That philosophy has turned into a masterpiece still in the making six decades later.

Stepper Homes celebrated its 60th anniversary last year, built on the solid foundation of its founder, says his son, Harry, now the chairman of the multi-faceted company that has both a home-building and land-development division today.

Rudy Stepper arrived in Canada from Germany in 1956 with just $7 in his pocket and a few tools in his kit bag, but it was his determination and entrepreneurship that brought success.

"He knew if you could work hard, you would succeed, and he was willing to take risks and willing to learn," says Harry. "My mother and father did just that. They kept their noses to the grindstone and in three years, they'd paid for their house — a house where the basement was dug out by hand by my parents."

And it grew from there to 40 or so homes a year until Harry and his sisters joined the company, then it expanded to its point today as one of the top medium-sized home-building companies in Calgary.

"The legacy of my parents, who were early immigrants to Canada and had Old World values, set the stage and developed the culture that still embraces Stepper Homes," says Harry. "Our success can be traced back to my parents, who set the foundation and we built upon that."

Still under Harry's leadership and visionary thinking, the company is truly a family business, although Dave Hooge, who is not related, has been president and general manager since 2009. Harry's sisters, Rose and Sylvia, eventually all the spouses, and now, the third generation are involved in some aspect of the company.

The world as we know it today has much in common with the past — and the visionary thinking that brought early success to Stepper Homes has obviously been passed on to the next generation. "I feel like I'm in my Dad's seat today," says Harry, noting he had a meeting with his staff in 2014 — a time when the market in Calgary was exploding with optimism and excitement as homes and condos were being built as fast as they could be to keep up with demand.

"I told them that it would peak the following year, and then the pendulum would swing the other way. No-one believed me.

"It was déjà vu. I remember my father saying the same thing in 1974. I had only been in the industry four years at that point, and I disagreed. He said we'd have to get rid of our debt, downsize and pull back when everyone else was going gangbusters."

That's exactly what they did — and when the storm of the 1980s hit, they were one of the only islands in the storm. "High interest rates, inflation out of control, banks shutting down businesses. ... But we were in a very good position and took advantage of it to buy and change gears."

That philosophy has carried through to today for Harry. It's not enough to say it's intuitive — you need to take nuggets from all the news out there, so you can see a storm coming in future and prepare today, Harry says.

And that's what the company has done.

While sales this year are down from other years, "we're right on our forecast," says Hooge. "We're confident our numbers will climb, but I believe next year will be flat or perhaps a slight uptick."

The company is working on a new affordable product line and will be moving into some of the newest master-planned communities now in the planning stages, including some from its own development wing, Harmony Park, which recently amalgamated with Highfield Land Management.

Stepper currently builds in Mahogany and Legacy in south-east Calgary, Harmony Park in Langdon, Kinniburgh in Chestermere, and Heritage Hills in Cochrane, averaging approximately 200 homes a year.

And the Stepper brush strokes continue to make their mark on Calgary's landscape.

High vacancy rates has put downward pressure on rents across the board — with some landlords offering incentives to help attract and retain tenants. ISTOCK

Calgary seeing high rental vacancy rates

Kathy McCormick

It's no surprise that with the weak labour market caused by the energy downturn, Calgary's vacancy rate for rental housing is at the highest level it's been since the 1990s - a boon for those looking to rent, but a hardship for area landlords.

It's a far cry from just three years ago, when there were no rental units anywhere after the disastrous flood of 2013.

The apartment vacancy rate was seven per cent in October, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) said in its recently released annual Rental Market Report. That's up from 5.3 per cent in October 2015.

"The vacancy rate has moved well above historical averages largely due to a rise in supply in both the primary and secondary rental markets," said Richard Cho, principal, market analysis (Calgary). "With supply outpacing demand, it's pushing up vacancy rates - and we expect that to continue at about seven per cent next year."

This, in turn, has put downward pressure on rents across the board, with some landlords offering incentives to help attract and retain tenants, CMHC said in the report. Factoring in both new and existing units, the average rent for a two-bedroom unit was $1,258 per month in October 2016, compared to $1,332 a year earlier.

Some are citing the economic conditions, dovetailed with the construction of several large apartment buildings for rental units specifically (something not seen for many year), and the rise in new condominium units investors are renting out, as contributing factors.

The purpose-built rental universe increased to 36,523 units in October 2016, up 1,296 from a year earlier and the strongest gain since 1994. Of those 2,557 were vacant, up from 1,867 the previous year.

And the construction of new purpose-built rental apartments continues, albeit at a slower pace, Cho said. "There were still 1,577 market rental apartment units under construction as of October, but that is down from as high as 2,000 in previous months. That will likely add to the supply in the next couple of months."

But net migration is positive, Cho said. "There is still a net loss in migration from other provinces, but there's an increase in international migration, and many of those people will be looking to rent."

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Deluxe estate home matches its picture-perfect setting

Kathy McCormick

The opulent kitchen in the Artesia show home includes a large marble island. CONTRIBUTED

There is a home office off the Artesia entrance. CONTRIBUTED

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder — and everyone who looks out at the natural terrain enhanced by ponds and careful neighbourhood design sees that beauty, which is one of Calgary and area's most popular homesteads.

Then people see the true country estate homes winding through Artesia at Heritage Pointe on Calgary's southern fringe and they know it's a desired place to live.

Albi Homes' show home is an example of luxury at its best. The bungalow sits on the edge of one of the area's ponds and the large windows all along the back and the extended deck with glass rails take advantage of the picture-perfect setting.

Inside is no less impressive.

The entrance sets the tone with its tall door flanked by equally tall and narrow side-lit windows, all carefully crafted with impressive cut-glass designs to bring the light in from every angle. The den at the left has an almost wall-to-wall window that wraps around one side to give more light, and the high ceilings throughout the main floor add to the expansive feel.

The half bath is next, then the rest of the main floor, except for the master suite, are open from here all the way to those windows at the back that capture the serene view.

The kitchen to the right is truly decadent with features that include European-styled flat cupboards with a vertical woodgrain finish that's at once striking — and there are so many cupboards you'll be hard pressed to fill them all. Tall banks of cupboards flank the built-in appliances, including the wood-grain finished large double-sided fridge and the built-in wall oven and microwave grace the other side.

But it's the countertops that are exquisite, and a real show stopper, in thick marble of cream with swirls of gold and light brown. They drop down, apron style, on one end of the gigantic island and run along two sides where they're just the right height for an eating bar.

Add on a huge rectangular hood fan over the five-burner smooth stovetop and it's drama at its best.

A pocket door here leads to the pantry and through to the oversized mud room/laundry area, where another door leads to the attached, front-drive triple garage. Yet another pocket door leads to the master walk-in closet — perfect for laundry duties.

Back to the main living area, the great room is spacious and inviting with a modern crystal-style low and long sleek fireplace gracing one wall and the large window again captures the view and lets in ample light.

The rest of the main floor is dedicated to the master suite — again large enough to accommodate a king-size bed, couch and large wall-mounted TV. The ensuite has a raised area with the large, oval stand-alone soaker tub and walk-in shower featuring dual shower heads and a bench. Double sinks in the long vanity and a separate make-up desk, the private water closet, and the entry to the closet finish the area.

IN SHORT

Builder: Albi Homes
Developer: Heritage Pointe Properties
Area: Artesia at Heritage Pointe
Model: The Carmini 2, a 1,877-sq.-ft. bungalow with optional 1,632 sq. ft. in the lower level.
Price: The show home is priced at $1,728,785 with extras such as basement development, curved staircase, and upgraded fireplace.
Hours: Open from 2 to 8 p.m. Monday to Thursday and noon to 5 p.m. weekends and holidays.
Directions: Take Deerfoot Trail (Hwy. 2) south to Dunbow Road, turn east and follow the signs.

The stairs to the lower level, which has been developed as an option in the show home, is located off the main living area — a dramatic curved wall with curved, open-riser stairs leading down to a wide-open 1,632-sq.-ft. play area with a lounge, games area, wet bar, and media room all in one. A covered patio has windows that open to the bar area inside — perfect for expanded living space.

Two extra bedrooms and a bathroom, as well as extra storage space finish off the lower level.

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